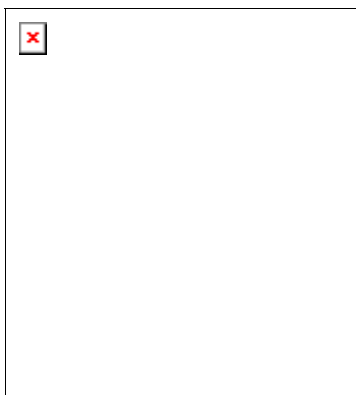




Research & Publications » Yasir Arafat - Psychological Profile and Strategic Analysis

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In the past decade, mainly thanks to the Oslo Accords, Yasir Arafat has gone from being the leader of an organization ostracized by most of the world following the Gulf War to becoming accepted by all the nations. From the status of international terrorist, under whose leadership numerous

deadly attacks were committed—among them, the Coastal Road Massacre (March 1978), the Munich Massacre of Olympic athletes (September 1972), and the *Achille Lauro* hijacking (October 1985)—Arafat won a Nobel Peace Prize, before turning once more to terrorism. From the start of the bargaining, when Israel offered the Palestinians “autonomy” (without sovereignty over territory) at the 1991 Madrid Conference, Arafat eventually obtained an Israeli proposal to establish an independent Palestinian state, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in the majority of the territories of Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip. He was even offered alternate territories from within the Green Line to make up for land kept by Israel. This proposal, made during the second Camp David summit and the ensuing negotiations, was also rejected by Arafat.

Furthermore, Arafat is responsible, in large part, for the difficult situation of the Palestinians. He is famous for his tendency to miss historic opportunities and precipitate catastrophe. Such was the case when he caused the expulsion of the Palestinians from Jordan in “Black September” 1970, and again in 1982 when he goaded Israel into the Lebanon War, which eventually led to his expulsion to Tunisia. Similarly, his support of Saddam Hussein during the Gulf War severely damaged the status of the Palestinians and led to the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of them from the Persian Gulf states. It is possible that Arafat’s rejection of the Israeli proposals of the second Camp David summit could be considered yet another missed historic opportunity, as it is doubtful that an independent Palestinian state will be established in the near future under better conditions than those offered the Palestinians at Camp David. In any case, many

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Palestinians and Israelis have suffered and will suffer as a result of that decision.

Arafat was born in 1929 and has always enjoyed good health. He does not smoke, does not drink alcohol, and watches his weight. Following the airplane accident in the Libyan Desert (April 1992), he sustained a head injury and underwent an operation to drain blood clots. Lip trembling appeared a few years later, without a decline in his working capability or damage to his cognitive abilities. He ignores his advancing age and his health condition, refuses to consider the possibility of retiring from the political arena, and has not indicated any potential successor. Arafat surprised everyone in 1990, when, at age 62, he married Suah Tawil. Despite his marriage, he did not change his daily schedule or lifestyle at all, and does not devote any time to his family.

This study analyzes the behavioral patterns and policies of Arafat, using two tools: psychological analysis and strategic analysis. The psychological analysis attempts to identify Arafat's behavioral patterns and to deduce from them the main characteristics of his personality—his outstanding features, functional characteristics, and leadership style. In addition, the study investigates his psychological development, and presents an analysis of the connection between these and his present behavioral patterns. The strategic analysis attempts to identify Arafat's typical operational patterns, from an understanding of his past actions, and the way he relates to the various "players" in the arena. From these two analyses, the study presents operative conclusions regarding the question of how Israel should deal with Arafat.

### **Psychological Analysis**

An analysis of Arafat's behavioral patterns, from the psychologicpoint of view, shows that Arafat has limited emotional stability. This expresses itself, among other things, in a strong need to control his environment, down to the most minor detail, as well as in impulsive behavior and rapid changes of mood. Sometimes he is bundle of nerves, while at other times, he is in high spirits. Arafat is a man of action who requires constant stimulation and finds it difficult to enjoy periods of quiet and relaxation. Owing to his emotional limitations, he is not ready to accept the authority of others and does not tolerate any dispute regarding his status. Arafat is suspicious toward enemies and allies alike. He does not trust anyone, and his suspicions are accompanied by extreme sensitivity to any criticism on the part of his people. He is personally hurt when people in his camp express criticism—even constructive criticism—regarding his political courses of action. Similarly, Arafat has a strong emotional need to demonstrate superiority over his partners as well as his rivals. He perceives himself as a leader of extraordinary historic stature. Arafat's interpersonal skills are

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characterized by problems with relationships, stemming from his need to manipulate people, bringing them closer or distancing them as needed. He has neither intimate relationships nor any close friends, and apparently feels no need for them.

It appears that Arafat does not place great importance on authenticity. He has a natural dramatic ability, of which he makes extensive use. With great skill, he adapts his style of speech and his message to his target audience. He uses repetition and exaggeration (some of which he apparently he believes with all his heart). He often uses body language, along with euphemistic language and hints, to say what he is prevented from stating openly. He is able to lie without batting an eye, and without his listeners being the wiser. He tends to accuse Israel of evil intent and conspiracy to persecute him.

Arafat sees himself as the symbol of the Palestinian nation. This is outwardly expressed in his habitual appearance in a military-style uniform. He lacks any of the characteristics of a private life—hobbies, entertainment, going out, etc. One can describe him as a one-dimensional personality—his whole attention and all of his interests bound solely to Palestinian political issues—and he takes a very narrow perspective on congruent topics (such as historical processes, political economy, social processes). Arafat is very sensitive to his honor and takes care that his surroundings demonstrate the appropriate level of respect. He is capable of breaking the rules of the political game when he senses that he is not getting the respect he deserves. Arafat is very sensitive to his place in history. He wants to be remembered as the father of the Palestinian revolution, as the founder of a Palestinian state, and as the Arab leader who returned the holy places in Jerusalem to the rule of the Arab nation. Arafat is characterized by resoluteness and tenacity of purpose; he does not give up, and does not surrender—even when faced with a hopeless situation. He has a surprising ability to recover, and an ability to maintain faith and hope. He also demonstrates great patience, along with an ability to instill faith and hope in the hearts of his people and a superb ability to maneuver.

Arafat has experienced many high-pressure situations and crises throughout the course of his life, some of which were life-threatening, and he functioned well in these situations. One gets the impression that at times of crisis he not only demonstrates an impressive ability to resist, but also feels great satisfaction. When he acts against a stronger power (for example, Israel), he appears to be spiritually elevated and in a great mood; he does not hesitate to make difficult decisions, shows courage, and is ready to sacrifice for the goal. In these situations, he refuses to give in to external dictates and pressure, and demonstrates a lack of readiness to compromise.

Arafat's leadership style is characterized by extreme centralization. He is the source of authority and decides on all issues, minor and major. His style is hierarchical and rigid; he is the final arbiter. Even when he consults with his assistants, he reserves for himself decisions on truly important matters: plotting principal positions and operative plans. He brings decisions to the PLO's forums for debate only when he is guaranteed support in advance.

Prominent among the psychological milestones that have crafted Arafat's personality and world outlook are his becoming orphaned from his mother at a very young age (three or four), his removal from his father's house in Cairo (at around the age of four) to his uncle's house in Jerusalem, then under Jordanian rule. The event, apparently, caused parental depravation, as from a young age he had to learn to get by on his own. These events contributed to the development of an extreme reaction of emotional denial, and taught him that he could rely only on himself and must be better than others in order to survive. From a young age, Arafat lived with the feeling that he had been betrayed on a personal level and on a national level (in his view, betrayal of the Palestinians by the Arab countries and the world). From this experience, Arafat also expresses a strong feeling that the Palestinians are victims, and that the world must understand and compensate him.

### **Strategic Analysis**

Strategic analysis shows that Arafat acts with all the characteristics of strategic thought and long-term planning, among them: vision definition and establishment of clear objectives, identification of the principal players, taking advantage of all possible tools to attain his objectives, recognition of constraints, and choice of paths of action based on their relative advantages.

One can see from the Palestinian strategy in political negotiations with Israel that Arafat has set red lines for himself and has stood by them consistently throughout the years. Comparing the red lines that the Palestinians brought to the negotiations at the 1991 Madrid conference to their positions in the negotiations at the second Camp David summit in the year 2000, one can see that Arafat stood by the red lines that he set for himself, and relaxed his positions to a very small extent, in contrast to the erosion that occurred in Israel's positions. Thus, for example, in the interim agreement, the Palestinians did not give in on anything, and in the permanent status negotiations they agreed to allow Israel to maintain settlement blocks on land whose size equals a few percent of the territories, in exchange for alternate land within the boundaries of the Green Line.

An additional strategic characteristic is Arafat's success in shifting the battle to the playing field that suits him. Arafat dragged Israel to Oslo after he had created a deadlock in the negotiations in Washington and undermined the Israeli-American attempt to conduct negotiations with representatives of the disputed territories. Israeli politicians, not taking into consideration the significance of the Palestinian demand in Oslo for the "right of return" and sovereignty over Jerusalem, agreed to include these issues in the permanent status negotiations, and even to defer deliberations on them for a period of five years, in the hope that Arafat would soften his position by then. However, as long as Arafat wins more concessions from Israel, he takes tougher positions on these matters.

In conducting negotiations, Arafat customarily goes to the brink and sometimes beyond. He does not worry about stretching the rope to the limit, changing tactics at the last minute, presenting crises, and reneging on agreements he previously agreed to. Arafat also customarily recycles the concessions that he gives Israel in negotiations. Thus, for example, he gives Israel security cooperation with the Palestinians again and again, and then violates the arrangement afterwards. Each time he issues new demands in exchange for this cooperation. Arafat also always leaves himself an opening for additional demands on Israel. Thus, among other things, he did not agree to complete the interim agreement and to compromise on the third withdrawal. From his standpoint, as long as the interim agreement had not been completed, he had a basis for additional demands, without even bringing up permanent status disagreements. In keeping with his internalization of the role of victim, Arafat prefers not to present proposals of his own, but rather to be in a position of reacting to Israeli and U.S. proposals.

Arafat's strategy to achieve his goals is based on political negotiation simultaneous with the continuation of the armed struggle. He saw his choice of the diplomatic path in Oslo as one strategy to attain his objectives, and, when it did not advance him sufficiently within a limited time frame, he took the tool of violence out of his toolbox. Arafat views the intifada both as a tool to exert pressure on Israel, and thus improve his negotiating position, and as a tool likely to bring about Israel's unilateral withdrawal without an agreement.

Arafat's strategy toward public opinion in Israel is aimed at enlisting the aid of large portions of the Israeli public to influence the decision-making process in Israel. He does so via two different paths: On the one hand, he emphasizes his adherence to the path of peace, and, on the other hand, he exacts a price in blood from the citizens of Israel, in order to pressure them to change their political views. Arafat sees the disagreements within Israeli society as a weakness. This contributes to the increasing extravagance of his demands, since he assumes that weakness will bring about a softening of Israel's positions. Thus, for example, mindful of the dispute in Israel regarding control of the disputed territories, Arafat prefers to encourage attacks on settlers and IDF forces in the territories over attacks in the heart of the Israeli population within the Green Line (even if he does not actively prevent such attacks). In addition, Arafat tries to influence the decision-making process by means of Israeli Arabs. Nevertheless, it appears that he did not calculate how much the Al-Aqsa Intifada would negatively influence the left-wing camp in Israel, and, therefore, his gains from this course of action have been minimal.

In the area of foreign relations, Arafat cooperates with the United States, based on his recognition of its power and influence. Nevertheless, he does what he can to reduce American domination of the political process by making an effort to turn the Israeli-Palestinian dispute into an international issue. He strives to include mediators from European countries and to introduce into the territories forces and observers from the UN or from other foreign countries. This policy is aimed at narrowing Israel's range of operation in the territories. The Americans, who brought Arafat closer in previous years, are disappointed in him. After he finished his term as president to the United States, Bill Clinton classified Arafat as an aging leader who lives with a victim mentality and is incapable of reaching a final peace agreement. According to Clinton, what caused negotiations between the Barak government and Arafat to fail was Arafat's demand to specify large numbers of refugees who would be permitted to return to Israel in the framework of the "right of return."

Arafat also attempts to enlist the aid of the Arab establishment. He does so by means of manipulative leverage on

leaders of Arab countries, knowing that bloody demonstrations in the disputed territories will stir up internal agitation in Jordan and Egypt that will require those leaders to consider his position. Regarding the Islamic world, Arafat emphasizes the struggle for Jerusalem, the third most holy Islamic site. Among leaders of the Arab countries, it appears that only Hosni Mubarak, the president of Egypt, exerts considerable influence over Arafat, being the patron of the Palestinians, Arafat's dialogue partner, peer, and partner in the political process. Mubarak is likely to allow Arafat to give in on certain issues in negotiations; however, in many cases, the Egyptian president has caused a hardening of the Palestinian position in the negotiations (for example, on the issue of Jerusalem). On the other hand, Arafat is able to identify with Saddam Hussein, president of Iraq, who is perceived by some Palestinians as a symbol of firm resistance. King Abdullah of Jordan and President Bashar Assad of Syria do not have much influence over Arafat, owing to their young age and residual tension between them.

In the internal arena, Arafat is aware of the constraints placed on him by the Palestinian street. He is aware of the leaning of Palestinian public opinion, which has become more extreme following disappointment in the peace process. The unilateral withdrawal of the IDF from southern Lebanon has apparently toughened his position, since it stirred up expectations among the population that it is possible to bring about IDF withdrawal by means of violent confrontation. Nevertheless, Arafat is capable of going against the flow in the Palestinian camp when he is convinced that it will advance the achievement of his goal of a Palestinian state, and that, eventually, most of the Palestinian public will realize he is right.

Among his people, Arafat adopts a policy of divide and conquer: He does not designate a successor, and takes care to divide the centers of power in the Palestinian Authority. Thus, for example, the control of the various forces are split between the "outsiders"—those who arrived from Tunisia and other locations in the Palestinian diaspora—and "insiders" from the territories. Similarly, a clear separation exists between control of the security apparatus in Gaza and the security apparatus in Judea and Samaria.

Arafat avoids direct confrontation with opposition organizations, as long as they do not directly threaten his rule, since he perceives himself to be the leader of all Palestinians. Additionally, Arafat needs the threat of terrorism on the part of the opposition organizations as a bargaining chip in negotiations with Israel and as reinforcement of the Palestinian war effort. Arafat thereby avoids true security cooperation with Israel.

### **Operative Conclusions**

Arafat will prefer negotiations only if he sees that nothing good will come out the continuation of violent struggle. Thus, he must not be allowed to attain political achievements as a result of violence.

Grandiose military operations—such as massive air force bombings and artillery shelling—have little effect on Arafat as long as they do not involve conquest of Palestinian authority territories. Under these conditions, Arafat is at his best, tends more toward taking risks, and is prepared to sacrifice victims. Nevertheless, many limited military operations are likely to be more effective since they undermine Arafat's feeling of control.

Economic pressure on the population, such as closures of access to Israel from the territories for workers, water cutoffs, and electricity cutoffs, will not significantly influence Arafat. He has no difficulty sacrificing victims, and thereby will find it beneficial to present to the world the distress of the Palestinian population. On the other hand, cutting off tax monies collected by Israel and cutting off outside aid do influence him, since money is one of his means of control.

American pressure influences Arafat, but will not change his position on essential issues (Jerusalem, the right of return, etc.). As stated earlier, Arafat prefers that representatives of the UN and Western European countries who support him sit around the table, in order to weaken the American hegemony in negotiations.

It is best not to act against Arafat by means of a public ultimatum, since he will conclude that its aim is to humiliate him. It is best to treat him with respect, using gestures related to his personal status. Such niceties influence his mood, satisfying his desire to win respect and recognition.

Permanent status negotiations must be based on a final and absolute agreement that will not allow Arafat to come up with any additional strategic demands from Israel. Nevertheless, Arafat apparently needs more time to digest essential matters, such as a solution to the problem of the Temple Mount and an end to the dispute, and to



reconcile himself to the fact that he cannot demand more of Israel. Thus, when the negotiations resume, Israel must not pressure him too much to reach a quick decision, although at the same time Israel must not give him any additional significant intermediate concessions. Should Israel will give up the ability to bargain with him in the future, there will be no way to convince him to sign an agreement to end the dispute.

It is reasonable to assume that Arafat will not give up on Palestinian sovereignty over the Temple Mount in the framework of a permanent agreement. His insistence on receiving sovereignty in East Jerusalem stems both from his vision of establishing a Palestinian capital there, to which he has committed himself, and from his desire to be an important leader in the eyes of the Arab world, both Muslim and Christian. It appears that Arafat is not ready to go down in history as one who gave in on the Temple Mount. Nevertheless, one should not discount the possibility that Arafat will agree to a compromise formulation, on condition that it be acceptable to the top leaders in the Arab world, such as Egyptian president Mubarak.

If Israel carries out a unilateral separation, which would mean withdrawal without an agreement from most of the territories under its control, Arafat is liable unilaterally to declare the establishment of an independent Palestinian state and to see himself as having brought about Israel's resounding military defeat. It is possible that the Palestinians would then gain for themselves all the rights of a country, in accordance with current international law and treaties, such as the right to self-defense, water rights, and more. In this framework, they would attempt to establish an army, without the limitations involved today, to establish foreign relations, and perhaps even to sign defense treaties with parties hostile to Israel, such as Iraq, Iran, and Libya. Arafat will not rest until the central issues of the negotiations, such as sovereignty over the Temple Mount, right of return, borders, and settlements (those not evacuated via unilateral withdrawal), are resolved. Therefore, unilateral withdrawal and the establishment of a Palestinian state will not end the conflict. Hence, it is better for Israel either to attain separation in an agreement with the Palestinians or to continue to control the territories under its authority by creating a security buffer between the Palestinian population and Israel until an agreement is reached.

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## ***Introduction***

The personality characteristics of a leader and the degree to which he influences the course of history have been subject to debate from time immemorial in various scientific disciplines. Historians deal with the degree to which an individual leader influences history, as opposed to the influence of the zeitgeist. They ask whether the leader sets the historical narrative, or is only a pawn in the hands of history (Schlesinger, 1986). Among political scientists, the argument has been made that the personality characteristics of a leader, such as the president of the United States, cannot contribute much to our understanding of the political process and its outcome (Skowronek, 1986).

This debate also exists to the study of the behavior of political personalities from a psychological point of view. Some scholars believe that the psychological features of a leader influence the political process, while others criticize any attempt to sketch a psychological profile of a leader. According to these critics, the personality of each person is unique, and there is no possible explanation, based on personality, for a political process. Additionally, there are those who believe that theories of personality are not sufficient to serve as a foundation for political conclusions (Craik, 1986). Despite this criticism, the topic continues to occupy researchers, with the result that a number of outstanding political leaders have been so analyzed. For example, all the recent presidents of the United States have been the subject of psychological evaluations (Feldman and Valenty, 2001).

The present study analyzes the behavioral patterns and policies of Yasir Arafat based on the assumption that such an analysis would be of value in forecasting his future behavior. The analysis utilizes two tools: psychological analysis and strategic analysis. The psychological analysis attempts to identify Arafat's behavioral patterns and to deduce from them his personality traits: outstanding characteristics, functional features, and leadership style. In addition, the study examines the psychological characteristics of his development and attempts to link those characteristics with his current patterns of behavior. The strategic analysis tries to identify Arafat's typical operational patterns based on his past courses of action and the way he relates to the various "players" in the arena. On the basis of these analyses, the study presents operative conclusions regarding the question of how

Israel should deal with Arafat.

### **Methodology: Behavioral Analysis**

The building of an objective psychological profile of a political leader is a topic in political psychology (Renshon and Duckitt, 2000). A leader's profile is created for the purpose of analyzing diverse psychological characteristics—behavior patterns, outstanding features, character lines, main motivators, personality structure, leadership characteristics—and how these influence his political behavior. Objective analysis is done with psychological tools different from those commonly accepted in psychology (such as interviews and psychological tests). The material available to the investigators is diverse, mostly information publicized in the media. The task requires gathering, sorting, and analyzing the material in an unconventional manner, for the purpose of personality evaluation.

A survey of the professional literature dealing with the personality profiles of political leaders reveals two key methodologies.

(1) *Quantitative methodologies*: such as historiometry (Simonton, 1990); integrated complexities of leaders' expressions (Suedfeld, 1994; Suedfeld and Bluck, 1993; Suedfeld and Granatstein, 1995; Suedfeld, Tetlock, and Thachuk, 1996; Marfleet, 2000; Schafer and Crichlow, 2000; Wallace, Suedfeld, and Thachuk, 1996; Wallace, Suedfeld, and Thachuk, 1993); operational coding of speeches and expressions (Marfleet, 2000; Schaefer and Crichlow, 2000; Walker and Schaefer, 2000); objective measurement of motivators (Dille and Young, 2000; Hermann, 1983; Walker, 1983; Weintraub, 1989; Winter, 1983). These methodologies allow random sampling of material and establishment of quantitative ratings. These studies are less susceptible to the subjective leanings of the investigator and provide a reliable test for comparison of different leaders over different periods of time. Nevertheless, they cover only some of the personality characteristics of a political leader. An important part of the leader's characteristics, including family life, emotions, interpersonal relations, and developmental course, as well as his functional patterns as a leader are not included in these studies.

(2) *Qualitative methodologies*, in which the investigators sketch a psychological profile based on diverse information (biographies, testimonies, newspaper articles, interviews in the media, etc.). These profiles are based on qualitative analysis of content and, to a certain degree, on psychological intuition and interpretation by the investigator. Some of the studies focus on the description and the analysis of outstanding features of the leader, without emphasizing specific personality theories (Choiniere and Keirsey, 1992; Dekleva and Post, 1997; Greenstein, 1994; Heifetz, 1994; Kofodimos, 1990). Other studies, based on analytical personality theories, attempt to explain hidden psychological processes (Muslin and Jobe, 1991; Renshon, 1996; Swansbrough, 1994). Other qualitative studies (as well as quantitative ones) focus on the identification and the classification of the personality types of leaders (Barber, 1972; Hermann, 1994; Hermann and Preston, 1994; Lyons, 1997).

The relative advantage of qualitative studies lies in their ability to present a broad picture of the leader's personality, as well as putting forward psychological theories and commentaries, which allow a more profound understanding. This article objectively describes the psychological profile of Yasir Arafat, using the qualitative methodology of behavioral analysis, based on content analysis (Kimhi, 2001). The methodology was developed as a result of an attempt to create a psychological profile derived from both clinical analysis and practical political analysis. Behavioral analysis is based primarily on a wide sample of the leader's behavior, without preconceived notions derived from specific developmental personality theories.

The theoretical psychological approach is based on behavioral analysis methodology described by Maddi (1989). He sees in personality "a stable set of tendencies and characteristics that determine common behavior, and differentiate between psychological behaviors of different people (thoughts, emotions, and actions) that have continuity over the course of time, and cannot be understood to be the result of biological and social pressures at a particular moment."

Behavioral analysis examines a wide variety of behaviors on different levels, as reported in the media, and relates to expressions, thoughts, feelings, and actions that have continuity over the course of time and under different conditions. Moreover, the methodology distinguishes between psychological assumptions and actual findings from data that has been gathered. In this article, psychological assumptions are brought forth at the end of each of the content categories, as well as at the end of the profile, where general psychological assumptions are brought forth.

This study is based on a systematic collection of data whose sources are newspaper reporting inside and outside of Israel and previously published literature about Yasir Arafat. The sources include:

- The database in the University of Haifa Library,
- The database of the International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism,
- Published features about Arafat in foreign and local newspapers,
- Books, mainly biographies (Hart, 1994; 1984; Gowers, 1992; Kierman, 1976; Rubinstein, 1995; Sayigh, 1997; Wallach, 1990).

The primary material surveyed is from 1990 onward. A small portion of the material also includes articles and interviews from the years 1985-1990. Among the information gathered, preference was given to information whose source was Arafat himself (interviews with the media and behavior), and to reports of people who know him well.

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## ***Psychological Profile***

### **I. Outstanding Features**

#### **1. Emotional Stability**

Arafat has a great need to feel that he controls a situation at every moment and that he guides events. This need expresses itself in various ways:

- He zealously reserves the right to have the last word in all political developments (even when his representatives agree to matters with the Israelis).
- He tries to control all the minor details of the Palestinian Authority, even the most peripheral, such as, for example, checking traffic tickets on cars in Gaza (Rubinstein, 1995e).
- He attempts to take the initiative during interviews that he grants, and, when asked uncomfortable questions, he answers with a question or changes the subject, in an attempt to control the direction of the interview (Vitz, 1993).
- He is the only one who sets his daily schedule, and all others must conform to his extraordinary routine (Levitsky, 1993).
- One of the best-known examples of Arafat's uncompromising need to have the last word was his first appearance at the UN General Assembly on November 13, 1974, at which he was requested to appear without his pistol. Forced to accept this limitation, he appeared before the General Assembly wearing an empty holster.

Parallel to his great need for control, Arafat has shown impulsiveness and a tendency toward outbursts of anger (see the testimony of his wife, Suah, in Perry, 1992d). Among other things, this behavior expresses itself in unpredictable outbursts of anger against his partners in dialogue. Occasionally, these outbursts arise from his perception that others are disputing his authority or are not paying him suitable respect. Sometimes the outbursts come during difficult periods when Arafat feels he is cornered (Shaked, 2001). However, they have been known to occur without any discernable reason, and it is possible that in these cases, the outbursts reflect depression (Rosen, 1992). One gets the impression that, as Arafat has grown older, such episodes have become more frequent. During his outbursts, he tends to shout, cry, plead, and retreat into himself, completely ignoring those around him. During these fits of angry, Arafat has a tendency to present unrealistic positions, to exaggerate, to threaten, and to present himself as a victim or as one being threatened. It has been reported that in situations when one of his underlings annoyed him, Arafat reacted with an angry attack and threw the subordinate into jail for a few days (Azulay-Katz, 1993). Nevertheless, in general, Arafat tends "to cool off" quickly, and often even apologizes for his outbursts. Those who have met him describe his changing moods—which rise and fall (Levitsky, December 17 1993)—his tension, nervousness, and suspiciousness. His eyes dart about restlessly (Perry, November 18, 1994), or show signs of deep depression (Kamir, 1998). At other times, he is subject to practically euphoric moods, when he full of vitality, immersed in a strange cheerfulness, and amused by events (Yaari, 2001). At such times, his mood is optimistic (Shaked, June 20, 2001); and generally light-hearted (Marcus, 2001).



Arafat is a man of action who requires constant stimulation. In his book on Arafat, *Arafat: Terrorist or Peacemaker?*, Alan Hart (1984) states that all of the Palestinians with whom he spoke describe the activities of Arafat thus: His eyes dart about all the time, his body moves, his hands move in meaningless motions, and his knees jump (Hart, 1984, p. 26). He seems to have difficulty relaxing for any length of time, or enjoying himself, except for short periods of quiet; he explains this as due to lack of time and the impossible demands of his position. In an interview with a journalist (Sa'id, 1988) Arafat said, "When I don't have too many things to do, I become restless, bored, or depressed." He has been characterized as being excessively active from youth. In a newspaper interview a few years ago, his eldest sister described him: "From the moment he exited the womb, he was already the leader of the neighborhood children. He would divide them into groups and perform with them military-style exercises; he had a stick, and would hit those who didn't obey his orders." (Hart, in Arafat's biography, quoted by Freedman, 1990, p. 104). It is possible that, in professional terms, Arafat would have been classified as a hyperactive child. This hyperactivity continues to characterize him today, despite his advanced age, expressing itself in his many hours of work, in his daily schedule, in his inability to relax, in his frenetic travels throughout the world, and in his nonstop talking (e.g., Colbin, 1990).

## **2. Independence at All Costs**

Arafat does not accept the authority of others. He is fearful and very sensitive concerning his independence. This attribute apparently developed at a young age, and has characterized him throughout his life. Arafat's behavior pattern of zealously guarding his independence has been particularly noticeable in the political arena. Several people who have written about Arafat have described this as an obsession for independence from other Arab countries and from oversight on the Palestinian issue (Sayigh, 1977). He tolerates no dispute concerning his positions, and must feel there is no one above him or even on his level. A characteristic example is Arafat's relationship with other leaders of the Palestinian Authority. For example he took steps to humiliate HAshrawi, which became clear that she had reservations regarding his manner of operation (Rubinstein, 2001, p. 124). This attribute comes out not only in everyday behavior, but also in the more important things. This guarding of his independence sometime takes on a somewhat childish nature: Suah Arafat relates that he even fixes his socks by himself and sews on his own buttons. When she once offered to do the job for him, he answered, "No way!" According to her, he has been accustomed to doing for himself his entire life (Avrech, 1993).

## **3. Suspiciousness**

Arafat's striving for independence is accompanied by great suspicion toward enemies and allies alike. This expresses itself, first and foremost, in all matters of his personal security. Arafat relies on no one but himself. He changes his schedule at the very last minute, without even reporting to his bodyguards (Perry, 1992a). He keeps his flight paths secret, customarily changing his pilots' flight plans, including destinations, and reporting to the airport just a short time before takeoff (Egozi, 1992). In light of the numerous attempts on his life, this behavior is understandable; however, his suspiciousness is not limited to personal security. Reports from those close to him describe him as a man who does not believe anyone, to the extent that he himself establishes his bodyguards' schedules, and he takes care that management of all negotiations remains in his hands and is not given over to his assistants. Some of Arafat's assistants have told journalists that his suspicion often borders on paranoia (Azulay-Katz, 1993). A survey of Arafat's behavior indicates a consistent pattern: He trusts only himself and suspects the entire world surrounding him.

Arafat is very sensitive to any criticism from those close to him and or even from well-wishers. He reacts impulsively to such criticism, and has even arrested a Palestinian Authority activist for criticizing him (Sella, 1994). The result is that his underlings limit their criticism (if any), for they can never predict how the "Rais" (big chief) will react. Arafat has been known to react with anger to even a hint of criticism from journalists or strangers, immediately going on the offensive (Shaked, 2001b).

## **4. Need to Demonstrate Excellence and Superiority**

Arafat has a strong need to demonstrate excellence and superiority. He ceaselessly tries to show those around him that he is successful and better than they are—his supporters, as well as his enemies. The need to demonstrate excellence expresses itself in astonishingly boastful talk. For example, to a Jordanian reporter in Tunisia, Arafat said, "The Palestinians would have stopped General Schwartzkopf at the gates of Kuwait if they had decided to fight the Americans, just like we stopped Sharon at the gates of Beirut" (Zarai, 1991). In an interview his office in Cairo, he said: "Many times I stood facing death, and I overcame it" (Gabai, 1993a). In a

meeting with Israeli guests, Arafat declared with incomprehensible seriousness: "I am the most important person in the Middle East" (Michael, 2001). In a meeting with the German foreign minister following the Dolphinarium attack, Arafat said, "Sharon and I are the two greatest generals in history. But the difference between us is that I never lost a war" (Tippenbraun and Lior, 2001).

These expressions show Arafat's tendency to present himself as a successful leader with exceptional historical stature. Moreover, Arafat appears to see himself as better than other regional leaders, on the Israeli and the Arab sides—the exception being, apparently, Egypt's President Husni Mubarak (Rubinstein, 1996). Some of Arafat's expressions hint at an occasional lapse into megalomania and self-perceptions unconnected with reality.

Arafat is a man of struggle; he feels a strong need to strive and overcome. This combativeness is so engrained in his nature that his assistants often use it to manipulate him to give his consent, playing a game of "devil's advocate." The following grotesque example illustrates how Arafat's negative-combative behavior brought him to agree to a proposal by Israel's Foreign Minister Shimon Peres (Barnea, 2001d): The technique, used successfully at Oslo, went like this: Abu Allah comes to Arafat, and tells him that Peres is despicable. He presents what he claims to be Peres's proposal to Arafat, and declares that it is not in the Palestinian's interests. He then presents what he claims to be his own different proposal, which he insists, "I forced ... upon that despicable Peres." The truth, of course, is that the proposal "forced upon Peres" was first contemplated in the creative mind of Peres. Only in this way would Arafat agree to the proposal.

In addition, one can understand by reading between the lines that Arafat sees himself as sly and superior to his rivals in his ability to manipulate others. This is also how he is perceived by the Palestinian street. Thomas Friedman in his book *From Beirut to Jerusalem* (1989) describes him as follows: "Arafat has the slyness of a merchant in the *shuk* (market), the sleight of hand of a magician, and the balance of a juggler in the circus, and, above all, the skin of a chameleon, which allows him to be painted with all political colors, each in its season" (p. 102). As an example of Arafat's juggling ability, one can cite his sudden invitation to six important Israeli journalists to meet with him at the height of the current intifada. According to journalist Joel Marcus, this was a "classic example of the manipulative ability of the *Galicean* (clever one) of Gaza." The fruits Arafat harvested from this meeting can be found, according to Marcus, in the wide coverage he received in Israeli newspapers. In one place, the meeting was described as a fascinating event. In another, a journalist wrote that Arafat was very alert, focused, and even optimistic. The general thread of the reports was admiration for his vigor, alertness, and good mood (Marcus, 2001). This action should be seen as psychological warfare at its best, reflecting Arafat's ability to manipulate and influence public opinion, in this case, the Israeli public opinion.

## 5. Interpersonal Relations

Various reports, quoting sources close to Arafat, indicate very problematic interpersonal relations between Arafat and those closest to him. The Arab author Mamdoch Nofel, who wrote a book on Arafat, reports a dismal atmosphere and defective personal relations in Arafat's close environment (Mantzur, 1995). Additional testimonies of people close to Arafat indicate that he "maneuvers" a great deal in his relations with those around him. He uses various ploys and tactics, drawing people close to him and distancing them, as he feels necessary. His people do not know in advance how he will react; and therefore they are always tense when asking anything of him (e.g., Rubinstein, 2001, p. 126). Among the tactics he employs with his subordinates are: instilling fear, arrests, outbursts of anger, pleading, presenting himself as a victim and/or a pathetic person, showering praise, meaningless appointments, and even bear hugs. In all cases, the outcome is identical—Arafat gets the last word, and the requester sometimes departs confused and even stunned. Arafat uses some of these tactics (especially presenting himself as a victim of circumstances) in his contacts with Israelis, as well (Barnea, 2001c).

The testimonies about Arafat's interpersonal relations, dating from the beginning of his life as a political activist, indicate a pattern based on the inability to maintain intimate contacts. From a review of several Arafat biographies, one gets the impression that this pattern of relationships was already present at a young age. As a result, he has had travel companions, but no real friends or comrades with whom he shares experiences, emotions, and difficulties. It appears that Arafat has practically no need for confidantes and intimacy, and he has never expressed feelings of loneliness in interviews, writing, or conversation. When a personal issue arises, Arafat always repeats his standard answer—that he has no time to talk about anything besides the *revo*. His relations with those around him are based principally on the pattern of "divide and conquer."

At the same time, Arafat can be impressive during personal meetings. Journalists and others who have met Arafat

describe him as having the ability to impress and win the hearts of his listeners. For example, the Palestinian author Dr. Rashida Maharan, who wrote a book on Arafat, describes her first meeting with him: "A man of hope, very quiet, a bitter revolutionary, but a very attractive man; he captivated me with ease; he controlled me; I could not break free of his influence; he spoke sweetly, with simplicity" (Gabai, 1993a). According to Sa'id (1988), Arafat has an amazing ability to make you feel you love him, not as a politician but as a vulnerable man whom you've missed and are about to converse with in private. In personal meetings, Arafat is wont to shower his guests with food and to seem personally concerned that they eat. He gives them the feeling that he considers them important and cares about them—a feeling that transcends gaps in status and in power.

#### **6. Authenticity: Dramatic ability, double-talk, exaggerations, and lies**

Arafat has a natural dramatic ability, which he puts to extensive use. He is a natural-born actor. It appears that some of his outbursts of crying were planned in advance (as practiced by experienced actors). Arafat is able to switch character in the blink of an eye, and takes advantage of this ability to advance his goals within the Palestinian movement and in his efforts to win recognition and support among leaders of the world, in Israeli public opinion, and in world public opinion. As an example of his dramatic ability, one can cite his behavior during the signing of the interim agreement maps in Cairo in 1993: While standing on the stage, Arafat refused at the last minute to sign some of the documents, and aroused the anger of President Mubarak (Rubenstein, 2001, p. 125).

Arafat uses his dramatic ability to convey his messages to the world with gestures, metaphors, and symbols. An example was his donation of blood in front of the television cameras, several days after the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001. He posed in front of the cameras to donate blood for the many injured, with full knowledge that his donation had no practical significance; there was no way to send fresh blood to the United States from Gaza. Not only had the United States not requested blood donations, but Arafat himself takes medication that makes his blood unacceptable for donation. However, as in other cases, Arafat spoke to his people and to the world through symbols and gestures, not with concrete language (see a similar assessment of Arafat's behavior in the course of the Camp David II talks, by Prof. Shlomo Ben-Ami, foreign minister in the Barak government, in Shavit, 2001).

Arafat is capable of adapting his style of speech to his target audience: the Palestinian national assembly in a refugee camp, the Jewish public in an Israeli television interview, etc. (See, for example, the appeasing, relaxed interview he gave Israeli television's Channel 2 on the eve of elections in Israel in February 2001.) Arafat is capable of changing positions at will. He knows how to "turn on the charm," and to appear as a serious and levelheaded diplomat without allowing his behavior to reflect his true plans and his upcoming course of action. When necessary, he presents himself as a pathetic person, whose life is threatened and who most urgently needs help. In the next breath, he can threaten to burst out in anger—and then invite his listener to appease him (Levitzky, 1993).

An Arab journalist who came to Tunisia to interview Arafat describes his impressions: "I saw him in a national assembly in which he demonstrated unbelievable ability to control. With Arafat, this always starts with friendly courtship, which includes many kisses and handholding. Afterwards, he cuts them off, gets tough, and controls the rules of the ceremony. Finally, when he cannot convince them, he becomes theatrical. He has a variety of expressions that can compete with great actors: amazement, moral outrage, anger, splendor, and clumsy charm. He pulls them out one after the other with amazing speed. Even his performances appear spontaneous" (Sa'id, 1988).

As the result of this dramatic behavior, it is very difficult to predict his reactions. A typical example of his unpredictability was Arafat's speech at the meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos. After a "good" meeting with Peres, his entourage expected him to make a moderate speech, as he had promised beforehand. However, in front of more than 500 world leaders, he made an aggressive speech, accusing Israel of the destruction of hope (Eichner, 2001).

Arafat's use of double-talk has been well-known for many years, and has attracted widespread journalistic review and analysis. Despite this exposure, Arafat has not changed his ways. He continues to adapt his messages to his target audience and to the situation. When the media pressures and confronts him with the contradictions between his words, he sidesteps the issue and generally blames them for misunderstanding him or taking his words out of context. A salient example of Arafat's double-talk was his speech in a Johannesburg mosque before a

Muslim audience, in which he declared that the Oslo agreement was like the agreement that the Prophet Muhammad signed with the Koresh tribe of Mecca (an agreement based on tactical considerations at a time of weakness, entered with no intention of abiding by it in the long term (Margalit, 1995). Another example was Arafat's declaration upon signing the Wye Plantation agreement: "We shall not return to violence." However, upon his return to the West Bank, he again declared: "Our guns are ready, and we are ready to raise them" (Zuckerman, 1998). In an interview with CNN at the height of the first intifada, Arafat said, "The forces in the field are pressuring me to authorize the use of arms in their possession, but I will not allow them." However, in conversations and in secret documents disseminated to his people in the territories, he urged the escalation of the intifada struggle and the use of live ammunition against the IDF, settlers, and new immigrants (Shaked, 1990). In an appearance on Palestinian television after the elimination of Yehiye Ayyash (nicknamed "the Engineer"), he praised suicide terrorists: "Let us honor the holy ones who rise up from the nation, and, especially, Yehiye Ayyash. Our mutual purpose is to carry on in their footsteps. Obviously, all of us are candidates to sacrifice our lives at the death of the holy ones, in remembrance of the holy noble and brave ones" (Atlas, 1998). In the same breath, Arafat put in a call to Israel's Prime Minister Sharon and President Katzav to convey New Year greetings, and, just afterward, to Saddam Hussein, to request his help to put an end "to the terror of the Zionist entity" (Shaked and Zinger, 2001). He can hug and kiss Israeli leaders, giving an impression of intimacy, friendship, and even a glimmer of hope (Rosenblum, 2001). A review of the vast amount of material gathered indicates a consistent pattern throughout the years of the use of double-talk and even triple-talk.

Another facet of Arafat's character is his strong tendency toward exaggeration. His exaggerations cover many diverse areas. He claims that Israel uses depleted uranium shells and chemical weapons against his people (Barnea, 2001b). He gives completely untenable numbers of dead and wounded on the Palestinian side (Schiff, 2001a), and blames the increase in abortions among Palestinian women on the use of the Israelis' tear gas (Perry, 1989). And this is only a partial list. His exaggerations are often completely untenable, and yet Arafat continues to use them, despite their easy refutation. For example, he continues to spread the myth that a map hanging above the main entrance to the Israeli Knesset shows the Land of Israel stretching from the Nile to the Euphrates (interview with John Afrek, and *Playboy*, August 1998). Similarly, he claims that the two blue stripes of the Israeli flag symbolize the Nile and the Euphrates (Rubenstein, 2001, p. 14). Some journalists have been amazed, on more than one occasion, by the "proofs" upon which his claims are based, which actually appear to be illogical. In general, he pulls notes from his pocket containing newspaper excerpts without distinguishing between facts, assumptions, and estimations, and with disregard for the reliability of the sources.

One gets the impression that Arafat tends to believe partial and unsubstantiated information when it supports his beliefs, accepting them—or at least presenting them—as hard facts. Sometimes it appears that he himself does not perceive his words as lies, but believes them completely. Thus, for example, after a terrorist attack in Israel, in mid-February 2001, Arafat claimed that it was only a traffic accident, despite the terrorist himself having acknowledged that it was a deliberate attack. Arafat thus has tried to evade requests for him to denounce a terrorist act, or to negate Israeli claims regarding Palestinian Authority responsibility for the incitement that led to the attack. The use of polyglot is one of the ways Arafat conveys messages to his people. He makes use of body language, implicit statements, hints, etc. Even his travels abroad at crucial stages of the struggle are meant to convey a message, and are often the occasion of deadly terrorist attacks (Carmel, 2001). Arafat's people know how to read his code of behavior (Shaked, 2001a). In this way, Arafat can later claim that the words were not his responsibility and can place the blame on others. An example of such "subtle hints" was Arafat's appearance (August 25, 2001) with a small submachine gun in his hands during a visit to a site in the Gaza Strip shelled by the IDF. All of this was done with full knowledge that he was being filmed by Palestinian television, and that pictures of him would be transmitted worldwide).

One gets the impression that Arafat is not concerned with telling the truth (to say the least) and has no emotional difficulty with that; his prevarication is not accompanied by any external signs that could give him away. For example, in a meeting with General Moshe Yaalon on October 7, 1995, Arafat was presented with a list of 35 wanted men. When Yaalon reached Muhammad Deif, the number-one wanted man at that time, Arafat put on an innocent face, turned to Muhammad Dachlan, and asked him, "*Muhammad Esh?*" (Muhammad who?) Intelligence information in the Yaalon's hands showed that this same Deif had been in Arafat's office at a personal meeting only three days prior. From some of his utterances, one gets the impression that he assumes that everyone lies. For example, the German foreign minister, Joschka Fischer, became angry when he heard from Arafat that he had no intention of denouncing those who had carried out the terrorist attack at the Dolphinarium. However, he was even more astounded by Arafat's response to his question: "Are you ready, from the depths of your heart, to renounce terror?" Arafat replied, "And the renouncement of the Holocaust by the Germans—are you really going to tell me that it is from the depths of your heart?" (Tipenbraun and Lior, 2001).

This behavior pattern comes into play especially when Arafat is attacked by the media—as, for example, after terrorist attacks. He usually blames the Israelis, claiming that they themselves initiated a particular action. For example, Arafat repeated many times the claim that Israeli security services assisted terrorists in carrying out the lethal attack at Beit Lid junction (January 1995) in which 19 soldiers and civilians were killed. Similarly, after one of many attacks in Netanya (Autumn 1999), Arafat announced that the Palestinians had nothing to do with the action, and that it was an operation of the Israeli mafia (Rubenstein, 2001, p. 13). Owing to Arafat's extensive use of his dramatic ability, double-talk and tendency to exaggerate, it is hard to evaluate whether Arafat truly believes his words, or whether it is all part of the "show," each time targeting a different audience. From a review of the material before us, one gets the impression, that, at least in some cases, Arafat truly believes what he is saying: This is evidence of extreme suspiciousness that borders on paranoia.

From this behavioral pattern, Arafat emerges as utterly unreliable, and it is impossible to rely on his word. His unreliability expresses itself in diverse ways: He does not object to lies, uses half-truths and exaggerations, speaks in double-talk, and conveys double messages. As a result, on the one hand, it is very hard to predict his behavior, since it comes from a man whose manner of thought and behavior is completely different from that recognized and accepted in politics and business in the Western world, and, on the other hand, it is difficult to know what his intentions truly are.

## 7. Symbol of the Palestinian Revolution

Arafat is seen by himself and by those around him as a symbol of the Palestinian revolution. His perception of himself as a revolutionary symbol is expressed in several ways, most outstandingly in his external appearance. Every detail is symbolic: his unshaven face, the kaffiyeh on his head, his military uniform, and his pistol. When he is asked in various interviews about his external appearance, he avoids responding on a personal level, and always gives answers of a political-ideological nature (Rubenstein, 2001, p. 42). For example, he says that he does not want to waste time that he could be dedicating to the Palestinian nation on shaving; or, in the style of a guerilla, he claims that the conditions of his life do not allow luxuries such as shaving. In response to a question concerning his uniform, he answered: "Don't forget that I am the supreme commander of the Palestinian forces. I cannot change my skin. I am not a chameleon. I also said to President Reagan, if you give me a country, I am ready to wear a tuxedo and bow tie" (Avrech, 1993). Similarly, he pays great attention to his uniform, a symbol of the Palestinian collective (Gabai, 1993e), to his pistol (symbol of the armed struggle), and to the kaffiyeh on his head (which creates a profile of the map of Palestine). All of these symbolize his path and the armed struggle, to which he has dedicated his entire life.

He takes care not to change his uniform even in international appearances, and, in this way, broadcasts to the world, and especially to his people, that he is in a constant struggle for the Palestinian revolution. On the wall in his office in Tunisia hung a photograph of himself and his wife, Suah, against a background of the Dome of the Rock—a photomontage, of course. On another wall were two large portraits of Arafat, one as an old guru and the second as a dynamic warrior (Avneri, 1994). In this way, he strengthens the myth surrounding his image, built throughout the years, as the father of the revolution and the creator of its symbols. Despite the apparent sloppiness, Arafat's assistants say that he dedicates much attention to this appearance. All of his external appearance—the theatrical and the provocative—serves to emphasize that he is the symbol of the Palestinian struggle, which stands completely opposed to the diplomatic appearance "acceptable" in the world.

Arafat has a strong tendency to blur every uniquely personal component of his personality and to present himself as "Mr. Palestine." Arafat has cultivated this approach throughout the years in various ways. For example, he has fostered myths about his biography, attempting to present himself as Jerusalem-born, while, as far as is known, he was born in 1929 in Cairo, his family moved to Egypt for economic reasons, and they were never refugees (Rubenstein, 1996). Similarly, his answer to the repeated questions over the years, before he got married, as to why he was not married was: "I am married to the Palestinian revolution" (Araf, 1994). He repeatedly claims that any personal criticism of him is criticism of the Palestinian revolution, and, therefore, not legitimate (Colbin, 1990). After the plane accident in the Libyan Desert, Arafatwarded off all attempts to appoint a successor for him, saying, "I am the Palestinian revolution, and there will be no other symbol for the revolution in my lifetime" (Perry, 1992). Even Arafat's birthdays have turned into the birthdays of the Palestinian revolution (Rubenstein, 2001, p. 153), in a manner that indicates a high-level personality cult.

Many components of private life, characteristic of other leaders, practically do not exist for Arafat. He has no hobbies, free time for going out, personal friends, or social engagements; he reads only material connected with



his work and does not read good literature of any kind; as far as is known; he does not go to plays, the theatre, or any other entertainment. He does not travel for pleasure (all of his many travels are solely for purposes of work), and has never been known to visit nature reserves, parks, or museums. His wife testifies that he sometimes watches cartoons and Westerns on television. One gets the impression that even if the blurring of boundaries is done deliberately for political purposes—to merge his personal identity with the Palestinian collective identity, which he symbolizes—Arafat has internalized his being a symbol of the struggle for Palestinian independence, making it part and parcel of his internal identity: “I am the revolution.” His personal identity has merged completely with the collective.

This perception helps Arafat, among other things, to see himself throughout the years as a sole leader without a substitute. Therefore, apparently, Arafat has never designated a successor and has not “mentored” any of the people around him to “grab the wheel” when the time comes. Another explanation for this is his never-ending need to strengthen his position as sole leader and only decision-maker among the Palestinians (Perry, 1992b). For example, after signing the principles of agreement in Washington, Abu Mazen (Mahmoud Abbas) won the hearts of the world media—as well as the hearts of the Western leadership—with his openness, moderation, precise formulations, and his leadership ability. In private, there was talk of Abu Mazen as the successor to Arafat. But when this talk reached the ears of the chairman, he immediately took steps to distance Abu Mazen from the stage (Azulay-Katz, 1993).

## 8. Honor Above All

Arafat attaches great importance to his honor. This tendency has characterized him throughout his life and has become more pronounced as his international status has risen. He perceives respect toward him as respect toward the Palestinian nation. His people are also very careful to guard his honor. For example, according to a British newspaper, Naji El-Ali, the Palestinian caricaturist of the Kuwaiti newspaper *El-Kubs*, was murdered in London because he did not hesitate to publicize a caricature that ridiculed Arafat, showing Arafat hiding the existence of a lover. There is no proof that Arafat gave the order to murder the cartoonist. According to the same newspaper, Naji was warned in advance in dozens of telephone conversations “to stop using Arafat in his drawings” (Machanayami, 1987b).

Arafat’s sensitivity to his honor is so great that he is capable of halting important political processes if it appears to him that he is not receiving the honor he deserves. From here also stems his sensitivity to formalities—and not only substance—during any negotiations: attitudes toward him, meetings with him, his status as the most veteran politician in the Middle East, relating to him as a de facto president, etc. For example, in conversation just before the Oslo agreement, Jack Nariye, a political adviser of Prime Minister Rabin, mentioned that Arafat was not yet president of a state, and, in reaction, the chairman shouted, “I am a president, I am a president” (Granot, 1993a).

When Arafat senses disrespectful behavior, he tends “to break the rules of the game.” The insult to his honor does not have to be direct. He can be offended, for example, when he is not approached at the right time, or, when it appears to him that he is being ignored. For example, in a meeting with Prime Minister Rabin, he was approached last and asked how he (Arafat) explains the celebrations in the Palestinian authority after every murder of Israeli civilians by Hamas and jihad activists. Since Arafat did not have any real answer, “he expressed displeasure that Rabin called him chairman, while the entire world called him president” (Verter, 1994). When Arafat gave a public speech condemning Jordan’s position on the peace agreement and regarding Jerusalem, experts attributed the criticism to his not having been invited to the signing of the peace agreement between Israel and Jordan (Sella, October 26, 1994). When asked by journalists, Arafat says that his honor is important to him and adds, “I am a president without land, without a country, so what is left for me? Only honor and etiquette” (Levitzky, 1993).

It is possible to attribute his behavior throughout the years—e.g., forcing many people who wanted to meet with him to wait for days and weeks, without knowing whether they would be called to meet with him—to his high sensitivity to honor, as well as to his tendency toward dramatics and even megalomania (Sa’id, 1988; Rubenstein, 2001, page 121). A list of the journalists who have suffered this treatment is very long. When the meeting actually took place, it was usually after midnight, shrouded under heavy cover of secrecy and mystery. Arafat never bothered to apologize to those who had to wait, nor did he mention the late hour, as if it were obvious that it is not easy to get an interview with such an exalted personage, and the path to meeting with him is long and difficult.

## 9. A Place in History

Arafat is very sensitive to his place in history, i.e., to how he will be remembered and what will be written about him and his leadership in the history books. This sensitivity expressed itself, for example, when his plane was caught in a storm above the Libyan Desert, and was about to make an emergency landing (April 1992). Arafat, who was sitting in his track suit, changed into his official uniform, strapped on his pistol, and carefully arranged his kaffiyeh, with the intent that if he should be found injured or dead—it would be in uniform (Weaver, 1994). Various analysts have argued over what historical image Arafat would like to emulate and how he would like to be perceived by his people. General Amos Gilad, the former head of the Research Section of the IDF Intelligence Unit, reasoned that Arafat sees himself as a second Saladin. The commentator Ehud Ya'ari believes that Arafat sees himself more as a modern reincarnation of the "Sahaba"—friends of the prophet Muhammad, who conquered all of the eastern world on behalf of Islam, and are considered by Muslims to be semiholy. According to Ya'ari, it is no coincidence that Arafat's favorite historical figure is Khalif Omar, who entered the gates of Jerusalem (Yaari, 2001).

From a review of Arafat's statements one may discern three central foundations to his historical self-perception. First, Arafat wants to be remembered as the "Father of the Palestinian Revolution," the man who founded and established the Palestinian movement, achieved after difficult struggle and many sacrifices, and succeeded where all the other Arab countries failed (Araf, 1994). As father of the revolution, he sees himself as a figure representative of all Palestinians, wherever they are (including residents of the refugee camps and Palestinians in the diaspora). Second, Arafat wants to be remembered as the president and founder of a Palestinian state, the man who started with a small organization and succeeded in establishing a country with all the trappings of an independent state, recognized by the entire world. Third, Arafat wants to be remembered as the Arab leader who returned the holy places in Jerusalem to the bosom of the Arab nation (Gabai, 1993b), and thus assured himself a place of honor among Arab leaders forever. In this, he sees himself also as the representative of the Christians, who, according to him, will benefit from his protection by receiving complete freedom of religion and freedom of ritual practice. The spreading of his protection to Christians will also, according to his understanding, ensure his place in history as a leader of universal stature.

## 10. Determination and Tenacity of Purpose, Ability to Survive

One of Arafat's prominent characteristics is his determination and tenacity of purpose. Arafat does not surrender, even when he finds himself facing a hopeless situation. Throughout his stormy life, full of upheavals, he has held faithfully to his long-term objectives. He has emerged phoenix-like from crushing military and political defeats. He absorbed a severe blow in September 1970, when he was deported from Jordan by King Hussein's Jordanian Legion. He soon moved on to Lebanon with his forces, establishing, in fact, a quasi-government of his own within parts of Lebanon. Expelled from Lebanon by Israel in 1982, he established his new headquarters in Tunisia; he then faced a serious inner mutiny supported by the Syrians (the Abu Mussa mutiny) in 1983. In 1991, he prominently supported Saddam Hussein during the Gulf War, which cost him his economic support from the Gulf emirates and Saudi Arabia. From all these setbacks—and these were only the most outstanding ones—that would have ended most leaders' political careers, he recovered and returned to the arena, ready to resume his struggle.

To withstand all these trials, Arafat obviously is endowed not only with great determination, but also with an astonishing ability to recover, to maintain faith and hope without despairing, to be endlessly patient, to inspire hope and faith in the Palestinian "street" as well as in the top leadership, and to maneuver so as to cope with changing demands. All these have enabled him, despite opponents and criticism, to continue and maintain his position at the head of the Palestinian hierarchy. He is also willing to sacrifice for his goals. For example, on his first visit to Jordan after the Sabra and Shatilla massacre, in an assembly in his honor in the PLO headquarters in Amman, he stood on the stage, and with sweeping motions of rage, he said to thousands of Palestinians who came to salute him: "We have lost 5,000 people in Sabra and Shatilla, and we are ready to lose 50,000 people more to free our homeland" (Friedman, 1990, p.104). In all the enormous quantity of material written about Arafat, not even one incident is recorded in which Arafat engaged in soul-searching regarding his people's sacrifice or questioned the price being paid for their "liberation." On the contrary, Arafat emphasizes and glorifies sacrifice as a way to achieve the Palestinian goal. He sometimes claims that the sacrifices the Palestinians have already made oblige them to continue the struggle with determination, so that past suffering and loss will not be in vain. He regards all Palestinians, including children, as potential fighters in the struggle (Araf, 1994). From his words, one receives the impression that the goal justifies all possible means, or that "there is no other alternative."

To these qualities two prominent behavior patterns should be added: First, Arafat tries— sometimes with success—to turn military and political defeats into victories in the perception of the Palestinian “street.” An example from the beginning of his career was the Karame action (March 21, 1968), which he has represented as “the first historical Arab triumph over the state of Israel.” (Wallach, 1990, p. 29) An additional example is his characterization of the Israeli siege of Beirut, which ended in the evacuation of Palestinian forces from Lebanon, as an unprecedented victory of “the few against the entire great Israeli army, on its air and sea forces” (Rubinstein, 2001, p.77). In other words, Arafat succeeds in turning defeats into myths of unprecedented victories—and the Palestinian “street” enthusiastically adopts these myths. Second, Arafat reveals personal courage. Even in defeat, he does not abandon his forces but remains with them, refusing opportunities for personal escape. This happened in the siege of Beirut, and again when he entered Tripoli, which was besieged by the Syrians from the sea in order to head off his forces.

Arafat demonstrates very high survival ability, both physical and political. He has survived many attempts on his life (forty such attempts, according to him), battles, accidents, and endeavors by his opponents to depose him. Even if the numbers are exaggerated, there is no denying that he has an uncanny ability to land on his feet.

Arafat has a good ability to identify threats, to adjust himself to changes in his surroundings, and to react quickly to developments. These qualities helped him escape life-threatening dangers, such as his escape from Jordan in 1970, the siege on Beirut in 1982, etc. The Palestinian “street” (with help from Arafat himself) has created myths and folklore surrounding his escapes from danger. The connecting thread in all these stories is Arafat’s sixth sense, which guides him to leave a house which is going to be blown up at the very last moment, to change his direction at the last opportunity, to change his lodging, etc. (Bergman, 1998). Thus Arafat’s survival turns into a myth of the Palestinian street that he is “a cat with nine lives” (Perry, 1992a), whose many enemies cannot overcome him.

## **II. Characteristics of Arafat’s Functioning**

### **1. Cognitive Functioning**

Arafat is “a one-mission person,” with the Palestinian issue taking center stage. He himself testifies that “only politics interests me, and I live for it” (Sa’id, 1988). From several reports, it appears that when the subject is not politics, he becomes bored and loses interest and concentration (Levy, 1995). It is possible that this is connected to his hyperactivity, making it hard for him to concentrate on subjects other than those central to his interest. Arafat is one who has only one issue at the center of his life and no other.

His subordinates and those close to him testify that Arafat has a superb memory for details and people, mainly with regard to anything related to their attitude toward him over the years (Araf, 1994). Most of his interviewers report that he maintains vitality during an interview, repeats himself accurately, avoids slips of the tongue, and does not allow himself to be dragged into subjects in which he is not interested (Perry, 1989). Some of those who met him reported that he has a compulsive sense of accuracy and order. For example, he repeats actions in a systematic and precise way, such as a fixed arrangement of the kaffiyeh on his head or emptying his revolver and arranging the bullets in perfect order (Kolbin, 1990). In general, the impression is that Arafat has an obsessive tendency to accuracy and order, but this tendency does not seem to interfere with his everyday life.

Apart from his theatrical behavior, Arafat appears to be accustomed to adapting information that suits his worldview, without any factual basis. One of many examples is his strange fixation that “the wall of the Temple Mount is not the Wailing Wall, but a Moslem mosque” (Zuckerman, 2000). Arafat insists on holding onto these claims even when his assistants try to divert him from the topic, due to the clear inaccuracy of his words, contradicting research-based facts. These claims make his words ridiculous. The impression is that his way of thinking sometimes becomes emotional-intuitive, ignoring the facts.

Arafat is not characterized (in the past as well as in the present) by orderly, bureaucratic work that includes teamwork, listening to various opinions, discussions about long-term policy, clarifying alternatives, determining defined objectives, etc. Arafat’s management style includes by tactics that change from one moment to another, according to data. When criticized that it is impossible to work this way, Arafat has dismissed his critics by saying,

"With time, everything will fall into place" (Louise, 1995). Among other things, as a result of this conduct, observers find it hard to understand his desires and intentions, what he is striving for, and they interpret it—mistakenly—as of direction.

## 2. Family Life

Arafat presents himself to his people as an ascetic who dedicates his entire life to the revolution, at the expense of his private life. At the same time, there have been reports throughout the years that Arafat has had several love affairs (for instance, Araf, 1994; Rubinstein, 2001, p. 111; Kierman, 1976). Arafat himself took the trouble to strongly deny these stories. In the past, there were malicious rumors about his being homosexual (Yon Michay Patzapa, one of Nicolae Ceausescu's Romanian heads of espionage, who defected to the West, wrote about this in his book *Red Horizons*), but there is no additional support for it, and, most probably, the rumors are unfounded.

Arafat surprised all of his acquaintances when he married Suah Tawil in 1990, at the age of 62. Suah, a member of a wealthy Christian family from Ramallah, is 34 years younger than Arafat. Her mother, Ramonda, was active in the 1970s in opposition to the Israeli occupation. When Suah was eighteen years old, the family moved to Paris. Suah worked in Arafat's office in Tunisia, and the two married secretly. She converted to Islam for the marriage; recently she made a hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca (Perry, 2001). Suah herself claims that she initiated the relationship, courted Arafat, and urged him to marry (Perry, 1992e). Since then and up to the present, there have been rumors concerning a crisis in their marriage and much comment on the fact that Suah and their daughter live for long periods of time in Europe (Kotlovski and Gabai, 1994). Most of the information about Arafat's family life comes from his wife's interviews in the media.

From a psychological point of view, the most prominent fact is that Arafat's schedule and way of life have not changed in the slightest since his marriage. He continues to conduct a lifestyle and daily agenda that is overfilled to the point of exhaustion, and hardly dedicates any time at all to his wife and his only daughter—something that his wife has verified in various interviews (Peperblit, 1992; Perry, 1992e). Suah comments that the daughter, Zoah, knows Arafat mainly from pictures and from television (Perry, 1996). This conduct also indicates the huge gap between the image presented to his people (for example, Suah's description of fifty intifada orphans adopted by her and her husband in Segev, 1994) and Arafat's actual conduct. This gap is probably part of the efforts of Arafat and those close to him to magnify the myth of "the father of the nation." Arafat continues to dedicate his whole being to the Palestinian cause, and even his marriage and the birth of his daughter have not changed his course. Several years ago, it was reported that Arafat gave Suah signatory rights on funds that he distributes among various PLO sectors and in the territories (*Ha'aretz*, 1992), and that she is, in fact, in charge of the PLO's secret bank accounts abroad and holds the secret account numbers (Perry, 1992e; Levin, 1993). If this is true, then it indicates the trust that Arafat has in his wife. There is no information corroborating this from any recent period.

It appears from various reports that Suah leads a completely different lifestyle than that of her husband: She loves shopping, cafes, museums, and Paris. She reports disagreements with Arafat regarding the management of the Palestinian Authority. Suah even has taken upon herself various roles in the Palestinian organizations. With regard to attitude toward Israel, there is, apparently, agreement between the couple: Her words during Hillary Clinton's visit in Gaza, claiming that the Israelis poison the Palestinians, are well remembered. In an interview to the Saudi Arabian newspaper *Sa'idati*, she said that she "hates the Israelis, and opposes normalization and the peace process" (Perry, 2001).

## 3. Lifestyle and Work Habits

From the many reports of people connected to Arafat in the past and in the present, a picture emerges of a person whose lifestyle and work habits have hardly changed over the years, despite the many political changes. Arafat works very long hours, day and night. By Western standards he would be called a "workaholic." He himself testifies regarding his concept of work saying, "a competent politician ought to read every piece of paper on his own" (Avrech, 1993). His schedule usually includes getting up late in the morning, breakfast (healthy food), exercise, and then meetings and work well into the late hours of the night (Kolbin, 1990; Raviv, 1995). The morning hours he generally dedicates to requests from individuals, such as women seeking university scholarships for their sons. Important meetings and serious business are conducted at night, until the early morning hours. During the late night hours, Arafat is at his best and is described by his interviewers as vigorous and alert (Avrech, 1993).

Psychologically, the outstanding fact is that, despite the many changes Arafat has undergone (Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia, the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank), his daily agenda and his basic work habits have hardly changed. He continues to live a lifestyle and keep up a daily schedule much more appropriate for an underground revolutionary or a leader of a secret organization than for a leader of a country. He continues to be occupied with all the details of his organization, from the smallest to the largest, keeping his hands on all the strings. Therefore, he carries excessive assignments and has no time left for anything else (Rubinstein, 1994b). Suah Arafat relates that when she asks him to stay with her more, he answers, "I have no time. I am busy. I need to handle our state affairs" (Perry, 1996). Throughout the years, the people surrounding him have had to adjust themselves to Arafat's daily agenda and his priorities.

#### 4. Health and Age

Arafat was born in 1929. Throughout the years, it has been reported that his health was good. He does not smoke, does not drink alcohol, is strict about healthy food, takes care of his health, and exercises. Despite his pressure-filled daily agenda, he devotes very little time to tension-reducing activities such as watching television or comedies, which he loves (Altman, 1989).

The great change in his health occurred in April 1992, following a plane crash. He suffered a head injury and underwent an operation to drain blood clots. After the accident, there were many reports about his tiredness, his poor health (Bechor and Rabin, 1992), and even about his lowered mental condition (Rozen, 1992). Later on, there were medical reports saying he was exhausted, but refuting rumors that he had had a stroke or was suffering from any serious diseases (Bechor, 1996). Nevertheless, after several years, the trembling of his lips appeared. The Palestinian Authority even blamed Israel for spreading false propaganda regarding Arafat's health (Sokol and Hess, 1997). American experts said that Arafat appeared to have Parkinson's disease. According to another assessment, he was suffering from hydrocephalus (Krouse, 1997). An article in *Foreign Report* presented testimonies that Arafat was suffering from deep depression (Kamir, 1998). At the same time, reports continue to maintain that Arafat is relatively healthy, strong in body and soul (Shaked, 2001c). One of the differences recently visible is that one of Arafat's assistants stands next to him during interviews and whispers to him whenever he finds it hard to formulate his words.

So identified is Arafat with the struggle that he has not designated a successor, despite his age (74) and health problems. Palestinian leaders, aware of his advanced age and his medical condition, do not address the absence of an identified successor because of their respect for Arafat and out of fear of his sudden rages, as well as from fear of a war of succession in the Palestinian camp. The Palestinian leader's blunt treatment of Hanan Ashrawi, when she called for an appointment of another Palestinian leader in his stead, after all traces of his plane were lost in the Libyan Desert, is well remembered. He never forgave her (Bechor, 1996).

#### 5. Functioning under Pressure

Over the years, Arafat experienced many pressure-filled situations, some of which him in mortal danger. Relying on descriptions of Arafat's conduct in times of crisis, one may conclude that he functions well under pressure. Reports about his mood and manner of functioning during crises corroborate this. Well-remembered are, for example, the interviews Arafat granted reporters, including Israeli journalists, from his bunker in the besieged city of Beirut during the Lebanon War (1982), in which he demonstrated an impressive ability to resist. Similar conduct has recurred during the current crisis. In a speech given on the occasion of Nachba Day (the Palestinian designation for Israeli Independence Day), listeners from the veteran PLO team testified (according to one of his bureau staff), "For years we have not seen such vitality in him; Arafat demonstrates a good mood, is recently absorbed in strange cheerfulness, and is amused by the events" (Ya'ari, 2001)

One of the impressive testimonies to Arafat's ability to cope with difficult situations and threats to his life was an interview granted to a *New Yorker* reporter in 1994, in which he described what he had undergone while his plane was about to crash in the Libyan Desert. Arafat, according to his testimony, was quite and calm. As a religious Moslem, he was absolutely certain that man's fate was in the hands of God, who determines the years of one's life. After whispering verses from the Koran, he said aloud, "Oh, Abu Jihad, wait for me, I am joining you" (Rubinstein, 2001, p. 99). Religious fatalism enables Arafat to feel relaxed in times of stress and strengthens his courage. It is probable that, after so many crises, Arafat's faith has grown stronger because of his feeling that he "is guarded from above."



In addition, it is notable that Arafat feels great satisfaction when he acts against a force greater than himself. Among the abundant examples of this are the Karame action (March 1968), the siege on Beirut (July 1982), and facing the IDF in the territories since October 2000. Psychologically, the impression is that in such situations Arafat is on a kind of "mental high." He appears to be in good spirits, does not hesitate to make difficult decisions, shows courage, and is willing to sacrifice people for the good of the cause. He refuses to submit to the dictates of external pressure and shows an intense unwillingness to compromise. Sometimes, he exhibits a strong religious inclination that allows him to believe he is fulfilling a holy ordinance and so makes him willing to take greater risks. Such a description is fitting when Arafat does not descend into one of his gloomy moods, during which his reactions are diverse: anger, tantrums, excessively dramatic behavior, and expressions of victimization.

### **III. Leadership Style**

A subject that attracts extensive coverage in the press and in the many books on Arafat is his leadership style. This combines his character traits, although the main factor is extreme centralism.

#### **1. Decision-Making**

Arafat is at the top of the decision-making pyramid; he is the sole source of authority and makes decisions on all issues, large and small. This is a clearly hierarchical style in which information flows vertically (from the top down) rather than horizontally. Arafat is the final arbiter in the organization (Machanayami, 1987a; Kolbin, 1990), and this pattern has continued to characterize him even after the Oslo Accords and the move to the territories (Rubinstein, 1994b). Yehosafat Harkabi, a Middle East expert, expressed the view that Arafat tends to consult with others, yet reserves decisions on genuinely important matters for himself, including formulating fundamental approaches and practical action plans (Perry, 1992c). Moreover, it appears that most of his advisers tend to offer advice consistent with Arafat's own views (Waller, 2001).

Some of the important decisions made by Arafat are approved by the PLO's official bodies, such as the executive committee, the central council, etc. It appears that in most cases, Arafat brings his decisions up for discussion in these forums only when support is ensured. Experts who follow the political processes in the PLO estimate that Arafat manages to manipulate activists to secure a majority (Bechor, 1993). In other cases, Arafat makes the decision alone without convening other bodies (Granot, 1993). Criticism on this point has sometimes been voiced (behind his back) by various PLO figures. For example, Faisal Husseini and Hanan Ashrawi at one point threatened to resign their public offices, hoping to convince Arafat that decisions could not be made in a democratic society without consultation (Sella, 1994a). Gaza leaders have also expressed harsh criticism at Arafat's behavior as a leader, claiming that he makes decisions alone, shares decision-making with no one, and continues to exhibit the mannerisms of a leader of an underground organization rather than of a head of state. In this context, they mention his demanding the presence of members of his government at two o'clock in the morning—a request no one dares refuse (Verter, 1994; Barel, 1994).

Officially, Arafat's centralization of power is expressed in three primary titles: president of the State of Palestine, chairman of the PLO, and chairman of the Palestine National Authority. This entails extraordinary centralization: an authoritarian government, similar to that typical of most Arab nations (Louise, 1995), without surrendering the illusion of democracy (Ya'ari, 1996b).

#### **2. Financial Control**

The most prominent expression of Arafat's central rule is his absolute control over the organization's financial resources. For example, a member of the PLO Central Committee once said that if Arafat were to die, the PLO would need 50 years to reorganize because Arafat was the only person who knew all the details relating to finances (Levin, 1993). Even allowing a degree of exaggeration in this statement, it is indicative of his style of financial leadership; Arafat is the sole signatory on checks and the only person who decides what is done with the money (Levitzky, 1993; Levin, 1993). He administers the Fatah Fund, is the treasurer of the PLO's military arm, and, in practice, controls the committee that administers the Palestinian National Fund, the PLO's central financial organization (Levin, 1993). After the Oslo Accords, contributing states announced that Arafat would not see one single cent until the establishment of an organized reporting system and the submission of development and

rehabilitation programs with specific details as to the purpose of the funds. A mechanism was established on paper, but it quickly became apparent to Palestinian economists who enthusiastically joined this effort that programs were made ineffective by Arafat's centralist policy, which indicated clearly to them that he would be the sole decision-maker (Verter, 1994).

In terms of financial control, there have been many reports of inappropriate use of funds and corruption in Arafat's management. There are reports that Arafat granted his wife signatory powers on checks (*Ha'aretz*, 1992; *Globes*, 1993), and reports of "dubious financial management" (Yechezkel, 1993), as well as unsuccessful financial management (Granot, 1993a). One reporter quotes the London *Sunday Times* as reporting that Arafat and his subordinates made inappropriate use of donations. According to the *Times*, the Palestinians used \$20 million donated by European sources expressly for the building of inexpensive housing in Gaza to build luxury apartments for Arafat's bodyguards (Dettmer, 1998). Three years earlier, the same newspaper published a Palestinian document indicating Arafat's diversion of millions of dollars in donations to finance political actions in Israel. This document showed that PECJAR—the Palestinian Economic Council, which is almost completely financed by donations—purchased real estate in East Jerusalem to reinforce Palestinian holdings in the area. The document also reported the use of donations to support Arafat's relatives, including his brother-in-law, in their businesses and to build luxury apartments for them. Another recent example was the report that Jawad el Hussein, the PLO treasurer, was forcefully returned to the PNA from Abu Dhabi (in the United Arab Emirates) in Arafat's plane. According to the report, Arafat became afraid that el Hussein was beginning to "spill the beans." El Hussein was responsible for the monthly transfer of almost \$8 million from the National Palestinian Fund to Arafat's private bank account, for what was defined as operational needs of the Palestine Liberation Army, a PLO organization. The bank account in question was never under any supervision and, even today, it seems that only three people know exactly what happens to the money (Bergman and Meltzer, 2001). Arafat was never personally charged with appropriating money for his own personal needs, and his name was apparently never tied to accounts of corruption (Rubinstein, 2001, p. 182). Various reports indicate that Arafat used the funds to bolster his own rule and foster the dependency of his subordinates. There is no doubt that Arafat stands at the head of a corrupt organization, and his administration of affairs points responsibility clearly at him. Despite his declared intention to fight corruption, Arafat has yet to fulfill his promises on this issue.

### 3. Personal Appointments and the Policy of Divide-and-Conquer

An additional central element in Arafat's leadership is the personal appointments he makes, especially the appointment of his family members. Immediately upon his arrival to Gaza and the West Bank, Arafat initiated an accelerated process of appointing men from the movement's leadership who had been with him in Tunisia to key positions. However, he then ignored them, kept distant from them, and brought in various activists close to him, so that no one knew his intentions in advance (Rubinstein, 1994b). For example, Bassam Abu-Sharif, who was one of the people closest to Arafat and his confidante regarding the Oslo Accords, was cut off after several months. One of Arafat's deputies said to a reporter in response to a question on this matter, "On things like that you do not ask 'Why?' The chairman decided that Bassam should go; we don't know why; maybe he spoke too much or voiced criticism when he should not have done so. Nobody here asks unnecessary questions. If you ask too much, you come under suspicion" (Azulai-Katz, 1993). Arafat behaved in a similar manner to Faisal Husseini (Barnea, 2001a). Rubinstein (1995d) explains this policy by claiming that Arafat always appointed two different people to the same office, so they would argue and compete with each other. All the individuals close to Arafat are continuously aware of the precariousness of their position, and they are consequently forced to behave obsequiously toward Arafat. In this manner, Arafat's status is maintained and reinforced through a cynical use of a "divide-and-conquer" policy.

### 4. Establishment of Dual and Triple Governmental Systems

Another attribute of Arafat's style of government is to establish several parallel governmental systems. A reporter of the *U.S. News and World Report* quotes Mansur Showa, former mayor of Gaza, as saying that Arafat disliked the decisions made by the city council and therefore established a small rival council, without informing Showa. This council, administered by Showa's cousin, approved the construction of a 20-story tower, the approval for which had been previously rejected by the city council, despite the fact that water and sewage did not reach the tower's upper floors (Louise, 1995). Ehud Ya'ari (1996b) recounts that, in addition to the existing hierarchy of military command, Arafat established an alleged civil counterpart, subordinate in practice to the Palestinian Ministry of Internal Affairs—a ministry whose portfolio Arafat himself holds. In a similar manner, Arafat circumvents the structural components of the Palestinian Authority, the elected council, and the government

ministries. This pattern places exclusive control in his hands, yet maintains an illusion of democratic rule. In the past, Arafat similarly established multiple agencies and corresponding departments inside the Fatah, fragmenting the foci of power to bolster his own rule. He then replicated this pattern inside the PLO by establishing multiple security organizations (with overlapping areas of autonomy and authority) with the aim of undermining his rivals and rewarding his supporters (Sayigh, 1977).

#### **5. Global Air Travel: "The Frequent-Flyer Club Member"**

It is almost impossible to refer to Arafat and his leadership style without mention of his practice in recent years of flying all over the world with unprecedented frequency. Masses of commentary have been written to explain this behavior: his need for respect, a reflection of his lack of a home and homeland, his sense of a nomadic existence, his hyperactivity, and his inability to be in one place for an extended period of time. We will add no interpretation to this behavior, as it is reasonable to assume that underlying it are many elements of Arafat's personality, described above. However, it is salient that his pattern of behavior hardly changed (excepted when confined to Ramallah during the winter and spring of 2002), despite the political changes since the Oslo Accords. This point combines with other various behaviors of Arafat that have remained virtually unchanged, despite the shift in status from head of an underground organization to leader of a state-in-the-making.

#### **6. Religiosity**

Throughout his life, Arafat has exhibited religious faith. Though not extremely religious, Arafat observes a significant part of the five daily prayers of a devout Muslim. He uses religion to help him cope with questions of destiny. ("My destiny is determined by Allah and not by man.") Throughout his life, he has declared himself to be a religious person. In his youth in Cairo, he joined in Muslim Brotherhood activities and was first arrested in 1954 as a result of these connections (Hart, 1984). It appears that this relationship was not rooted in religious fanaticism, but stemmed from his negative attitude toward Arab institutions, which had abandoned the Palestinians. Arafat typically uses religion for political purposes. He frequently mentions the significance of the holy places in Jerusalem and repeats the vision, "Soon we will all return to el-Kuds and conduct a jihad prayer in its mosques," to mobilize the support of the Muslim world (Gabai, 1992). Nonetheless, we can assume that his insistence on Palestinian sovereignty of the places holy to Islam in Jerusalem also stems from his own personal religious motives in addition to political motives.

### **IV. Developmental Background and General Psychological Hypotheses**

Much has been written about Arafat's biography from a psychological point of view. This report has no intention of recounting Arafat's development, but will point to significant psychological milestones, which, in its view, shaped his personality and worldview, and we shall attempt to derive general psychological hypotheses on this foundation.

#### **1. A Difficult Childhood: An Orphan**

The most prominent fact in Arafat's development from a psychological perspective was the death of his mother when he was four years old. After his mother's death, Arafat and a younger brother were sent to their uncle in Jerusalem for several years, far from his father and his close family in Cairo (Friedman, 1990, pp. 100-106). Information on these years is scanty and is primarily based on much later testimonies of his relatives. The existing testimonies are sufficient to assess that Arafat had a "difficult childhood" (Lavi, 1994). It appears that only at the approximate age of eight, did he return to his father's home in Egypt where, as the accounts suggest, his eldest sister Anam played a central role in raising the children. Years later in an interview, Arafat said that she was a mother, a sister, and a best friend to him (Landers, 1994).

Several biographies describe an unfavorable relationship between Arafat and his father. It is known that Arafat did not go to his father's funeral, and did not visit his grave when returning to Gaza after signing the Oslo (Raphael, 1998). Arafat's psychological framework consequently includes the traumatic death of his mother at a tender age and life away from his father (at least during the years he spent in Jerusalem). This may be seen as a life event that forced him to be "a child who raises himself and learns to depend exclusively on himself"—a child who grew up with many emotional deficiencies and, possibly, little emotional support after the death of his

mother.

The death of his mother at a tender age apparently caused an extreme response of emotional denial as a defense mechanism (see the testimony of his brother in Lavi, 1994). This denial of emotions apparently allowed him to cope with the numerous difficulties involved in losing the most significant figure in his life at so young an age. It had a significant affect on his personality: a restricted emotional world, limited ability to establish intimate relations, intense isolation stemming from a lack of emotional need for intimacy (therefore, this isolation is not oppressive), an obsessive need for control, an extreme need for respect and honor from others, and a difficulty in understanding and empathizing with others.

As noted earlier, Arafat learned at a young age that he could depend only on himself. This constant aspiration for independence and self-sufficiency (Sayigh, 1977, p. 697) is probably based on adults having disappointed him in times of need. This trait may be reflected in his inability to collaborate with others or work in a team; he sees himself as the one who knows best; he also has an intense inability to rely on others or delegate authority to others. This perception is later generalized to the state of the Palestinian nation, betrayed by the world and by the Arabs. Arafat's conclusion is to aim for independence at any price, placing no trust in the Arab states or their leaders. He formed a perception that only the Palestinians can help themselves and their actions will "force" the Arab world to rally to their support.

Arafat's struggle for survival taught him that he must be better than others to survive. He developed an approach to life that includes extreme suspicion toward people "on the other side" (Mansur, 1995) and an incessant need to prove to his environment (rivals and well as partners) just how successful and superior he is. On the other hand, this need is accompanied by militarism, expressed in attempts to deceive his rivals, overcome them, and have the last word. This feeling probably explains his leadership style and his belief that he is the only person qualified to administer the policy of the Palestinian movement. This is the source of his adherence to a centralist leadership style.

## **2. Betrayal and Sense of Victimization**

As early as his childhood, Arafat became involved in underground political activities and stood out as a leader of Palestinian students in Cairo. From the beginning, he was exceptional in his independent approach that deviated from that of the traditional leadership, which he saw as defeatist. In the 1948 war, when he was a student in Cairo, he joined a small group of students who attempted to reach Israel to take part in the fighting. When they reached Gaza, a regular Egyptian army unit disarmed them and prevented them from joining in the hostilities. Arafat and his colleagues would later state: "The *Nachba* began when we were banished from the battleground in Palestine" (Rubinstein, 2001, p.57). He was an eyewitness to the Arab defeat in the wars with Israel and to the unchanging deplorable situation of the Palestinians resulting from the Arab states' lack of mobilization for their cause. Arafat interpreted this as betrayal of the Palestinian cause by the Arab states, first and foremost (see also Rubinstein, 2001, pp. 53-57). This, inter alia, is the source of his belief that others cannot be relied upon. Arafat expresses this belief in a statement that he frequently repeats, "The truth is that the Arabs betrayed us" (Hart, 1994, p.77). Arafat also experienced personal humiliation at the hands of Arab governments. For example, in 1966, he was imprisoned in Syria for several weeks when the Syrian government attempted to gain control of the Fatah movement. Some of his biographies recount that he was also tortured. A review of Arafat's own statements indicates that this sense of betrayal is a continuous thread throughout his long years of struggle.

This sense of betrayal probably comes in addition to a sense of personal betrayal. The origin of this feeling was in his childhood. A child is likely to perceive the death of a parent at a young age as betrayal and abandonment. This feeling could have been exacerbated after Arafat and his brother were sent away from their father's house in Cairo to their uncle's house in Jerusalem for a few years. This was a double betrayal: the death of his mother and his being sent away from his father's house at a young age, when a child is not yet able to understand and formulate the experience in words (in adult language). These things become imprinted, mainly at the emotional level. One can only surmise that Arafat is very sensitive to this issue, due to his personal background.

A high sensitivity toward betrayal could be one of the psychological explanations of Arafat's obvious reluctance to come to a confrontation with the Palestinian opposition. He is very sensitive to this type of accusation, and will do anything to come to terms with the opposition and to reach a compromise with it, if only to avoid having to fight it and be accused by some of his people as having betrayed them. This is true as long as the opposition does not directly threaten his rule or the realization of his strategic objectives.

As part of the political perception of betrayal of the Palestinians, Arafat also expresses a strong sense of their being the victims. Arafat has a fundamental sense of himself as a victim, which is inseparable from his perception of the Palestinian people as victims. (See President Clinton's evaluation, in *Yediot Aharonot*, 2001). It can be assumed that this stems both from his childhood experiences and from his complete identification with the fate of the Palestinian people. Therefore, he feels that he (in other words, the Palestinian people) is always in the right, and the world must always understand him—even when what is at issue is terrorism and the murder of innocent civilians. It seems that this inclination enables Arafat to lay the blame on Israel, even for severe acts of terrorism and to feel that these acts are the reaction of the weak party, the victim, whom the world has ignored and left to suffer. As a result he has developed a conviction that the terrible wrong that was perpetrated on the Palestinians constitutes a moral justification for any act of opposition, including the use of terrorism, which he regards as both legitimate and moral.

### **3. Arafat as a Survivor: In Constant Struggle**

Most of Arafat's life as an adult can be characterized having the stance of the leader of an underground, persecuted by his enemies who wish to kill him and who must wage a constant war with his enemies for his very existence and must struggle over the position of authority with his partners. Despite all the attempts to liquidate him or to oust him from the position of leadership, he overcame his enemies and survived. Moreover, he has brought his organization to impressive achievements: from a marginal, unimportant underground organization, he brought it to the brink of statehood, with most of the world recognizing its right to exist.

Arafat practically doesn't know a pattern of living that is not a struggle. It is reasonable to assume that he sees himself as someone who has overcome all of his opponents—many of whom are no longer alive—and triumphed over them. His survival is probably also connected to his development and to the background that characterized his upbringing. It can be assumed that already as a young boy he was obliged to develop a sophisticated ability to survive, in order to cope with the difficulties of his reality. Among other characteristics, he became highly active, developed an ability to lead and to manipulate the children in his environ, and from a very young age he directed all his resources to political struggle.

It can be surmised that a person who has spent all his life in constant struggle will find it difficult—especially at an advanced age—to make the abrupt switch to a life of peace and cooperation, based on trust. There is no evidence that there were any marked changes in Arafat's behavior when he made the transition from Tunisia to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in the wake of the Oslo Accords. His style of expression (mainly when directed toward his own people) provides no evidence of any marked change in his outlook. Neither do any other characteristics of his behavior show any evidence of such changes.

### **4. Self-Identity**

Arafat's choice at an early stage of his life to devote his whole being to the Palestinian cause can be explained as a circumvention of the need to deal with difficulties and problems on the personal level. The total devotion of his life to the Palestinian cause enables him to minimize his inner emotional and personal world, by being focused only on the political "really important" issues. Thus, Arafat found an efficient way to deal with emotional problems, with development of individual identity (as noted, his personal and collective identity merged) and with individual growth and other developmental tasks. He has paid a price for this in that his personality is one-dimensional, structured totally around the political issue.

### **5. On the Verge of Realization of the Dream**

All of his life, Arafat struggled for the Palestinian cause. In recent years he has seen the realization of his dream. For example, at the central gathering of the Palestinian Authority on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the proclamation of Palestinian independence, Arafat stated: "We want our State in May (1999). The Palestinian people are in the process of realizing the declaration of independence of 1998 and in the process of liberating their land. In the coming days we shall have control over half of the Palestinian land, until we reach Jerusalem, to raise the flag above its mosques and churches" (Hess, 1998).

He began as the head of a small and unknown organization and currently is at the center of the Middle East conflict, a personage famous all over the world, who enjoys extensive international support and is honorably



received by many world leaders. Arafat currently faces a very difficult dilemma: He wants to go down in history as the founder of the Palestinian state and as the father of its revolution. To succeed in the first, he must make difficult concessions that will severely harm, from his point of view, his status as the "father of the revolution" (because it will entail the subjection of his opponents and a difficult struggle to overcome them). This dilemma is exacerbated by his advanced age and the status of his health. So far, there are no signs that he has made a conclusive choice between these two aspirations.

## 6. Summary of Personality Attributes

The characteristic features of Arafat's personality do not indicate, in our opinion, a clearly specific disorder (according to the definitions of the American Psychiatric Association: DSM-IV, 1994). At the same time, it is possible to point out various characteristics that accord with an unspecific personality disorder. The nature of this overview, based mainly on evidence provided by others, does not enable us to determine with certainty whether these characteristics meet the complete criterion necessary for a determination of a personality disorder.

Therefore, we limit ourselves to an enumeration of the characteristics that have been raised here: a large measure of suspicion, including toward his close associates and members of his entourage; distrust of the loyalty of people who are close to him; being unforgiving of people whom he sees as having offended or hurt him (characteristic features of the paranoid personality); lack of emotional stability expressing itself in high spirits alternating with dejection; a difficulty in controlling anger and a tendency to outbursts of rage (characteristic features of the borderline personality); a sense of grandeur and importance, and the expectation that others should recognize him as unique and superior to others; exaggerated sensitivity to criticism; demanding admiration from the people around him; a developed sense of "I deserve"; manipulative interpersonal relationships (a characteristic feature of the narcissistic personality).

Beyond the attempt to diagnose a specific disorder there is another characteristic, which we shall term "a one-dimensional personality." This one-dimensionality is a result of an exclusive preoccupation with the Palestinian issue and is expressed in a narrow perspective on a range of subjects, such as historical processes, political economics, global processes, sociological processes, long-range planning, etc. (See a similar evaluation in Eldar, 2001.) In other words, Arafat lacks a wide base of knowledge based on education, reading, and an acquaintance with cultures, nations, and different people. At the same time, he does not sense any lack of knowledge and regards himself as more qualified and better suited than others.

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## ***Strategic Analysis of Arafat***

This section will present the strategic characteristics of Yasir Arafat. The components of his strategy are a direct outcome of his personality, his environmental conditions, and the players involved. As Arafat is entirely focused on Palestinian national affairs, his strategy is directed at two principal objectives: preserving his personal status as leader of the Palestinians and achieving a solution to the Palestinian problem.

The players or factors involved with Arafat are as follows: in Israel, the government of Israel, elements from the opposition, Israeli public opinion, and Israeli Arabs; in the international arena, the United States, the Arab countries, Europe, Russia, the United Nations, other countries throughout the world, and worldwide public opinion; in the Arab arena, the rulers of the Arab states (principally Egypt and Jordan) and Arab public opinion; on the domestic front, his intimates in power, opposition organizations, and the entire Palestinian public, both in the areas under his control and in the Palestinian diaspora (Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, the Gulf states, etc.).

### **I. Is Arafat a Strategist or a Leader Acting on Instinct?**

A preliminary question with regard to the strategy adopted by Arafat is whether he operates as a strategist, or as a leader reacting instinctively and emotionally to events. The conclusion of this study is that Arafat makes use of all the characteristics of strategic thought and long-term planning: definition of a vision and setting clear goals; identification of the players; utilization of all possible tools for the purpose of attaining his goals; selecting courses of action (including identification of his relative advantages), and the like.

Thanks to the strategy that he has adopted and the existence of certain environmental conditions (such as Israel's willingness to enter into a dialogue with him), Arafat has racked up some impressive achievements in the last decade. Once the head of an organization shunned by the entire world, Arafat has become a leader who is popular across the globe; once an international terrorist (for example: the attack on the bus on Israel's Coastal Road in March 1978, the murder of the Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics in September 1972, the murder on the *Achille Lauro* in October 1985, and so forth), he became a Nobel Peace Prize laureate – and subsequently returned to the ways of terror. From the early bargaining point at which Israel was offering the Palestinians “autonomy for the population only” (with no sovereignty over the land), Arafat reached the heights of Camp David II, where Israel and the United States proposed that he establish an independent Palestinian state, with East Jerusalem as its capital, extending over approximately 95 percent of Judea and Samaria and the Gaza Strip, as well as alternative territory within the Green L. At the same time, it is possible that Arafat's rejection of Israel's proposal and his contribution to the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada will prove to be the missed opportunity of all time, because it is doubtful whether an independent Palestinian state can be established in the coming years on better terms than those which were offered to the Palestinians (see interview with Shlomo Ben Ami, Israel's foreign minister at the time of the Camp David II summit, Shavit, 2001).

On the other hand, there are those who believe that Arafat is not a strategist, or that, at times, he does not adopt a course of action that requires profound thought. For example, Palestinian Prof. Yazid Sayagh explained, in August 2001, that, on the eve of the Al-Aqsa Intifada, Arafat was facing a political dilemma, and he ran away from it. In his opinion, this behavior did not reflect the existence of a strategy based on the use of force, but rather, the lack of any strategy whatsoever. Sayagh claims that, in the political area, Arafat's management is characterized by a high level of improvisation and short-term vision. As he sees it, the same pattern was characteristic of Arafat following Sharon's ascent of the Temple Mount: He saw an opportunity to improve his international status, enlist vociferous Arab support, and topple Ehud Barak. Accordingly, he retroactively authorized the use of arms (Eldar, 2001).

## II. The Basic Premises of Arafat's Strategy

*A. The existence of clear strategic goals toward which the Palestinians are aiming--the establishment of a Palestinian state within the June 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as its capital, and a solution for the problem of the refugees—has been a constant.*

Arafat has consistently and clearly set these goals for himself and his environment. Thus, for example, he has never stopped presenting Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian state (Gabai, 1992; *Ha'aretz*, 1989; Hess, 1998; Chalila, 1994; *Ma'ariv*, 1993; Shaked and Raz, 2001). By contrast, Israel has adopted more flexible positions in this matter. At the Camp David II summit, Israel discussed with Arafat the possibility of divided sovereignty over Jerusalem, whereas, in the early stages of the negotiations with the Palestinians, at the Madrid Conference, Israel had not agreed to discuss the question of sovereignty over Jerusalem.

*The clarity of Arafat's objectives serves as a spotlight to light his way.* As a general rule, Arafat supports anything that advances the cause of the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, in the format envisioned by Arafat, and objects to anything that threatens it. His consent so far to defer the declaration of an independent state results, inter alia, from his estimation that such a move would be more harmful than helpful to the chances of actually establishing such a state. In other words, to this day, Arafat has preferred to wait for the declaration of a Palestinian state within the framework of an agreement, understanding that this alternative is preferable from the standpoint of the probability of establishing an independent Palestinian state to quarreling between the United States and Israel. When the situation of inequality reverses itself, Arafat will make haste to declare an independent state, even unilaterally.

*Notwithstanding the clarity of the objective with regard to the establishment of a Palestinian state, Arafat is having a hard time deciding on the conditions for ending the conflict with Israel that has been the purpose of his life.* As was determined at Camp David II, Arafat is having difficulty accepting the Israeli demand to sign a convention ending the conflict with Israel as part of the permanent agreement. Palestinian spokespersons, such as Hanan Ashrawi and Saeb Erekat, have explained, in the past, that the Palestinians made a great concession by agreeing to establish a Palestinian state in the disputed territories only. These explanations, however, were addressed to public opinion in Israel and the West. It appears that, notwithstanding the Palestinians' signature on the Oslo Agreement, Arafat finds it difficult, on both the emotional and the strategic levels, to admit that the Palestinians have renounced their share in the Land of Israel within the Green Line. As one who sees himself, and

is perceived by his people, as the father of the revolution, Arafat cannot admit publicly that he is giving up the dream that has been the main motive of the Palestinian revolution. Accordingly, to date, he has refused to compromise on his claims with regard to the "right of return," claims which have proven to be far more expensive than Israel originally thought. This ambiguity raises the following question: Is a Palestinian state within the June 1967 borders the final objective of the Palestinian struggle, or is it only an interim stage, to be followed by a struggle for the remaining territory of the Land of Israel? It may be estimated that Arafat views the establishment of a Palestinian state within the June 1967 borders as a realistic strategic objective that the Palestinians can attain within this generation. At the same time, he has not closed the book on the ultimate Palestinian dream with regard to the remaining areas of the Land of Israel.

*B. The great gap between the military and political power of the State of Israel and that of the Palestinians has also been a constant factor, dictating Arafat's strategic choices.*

This starting point has been valid ever since Arafat started his activity on behalf of the Palestinian cause, and remains so to this day. This dictates the selection of strategies intended to fully exploit his "weak strength"—that is, the use of the tools of violence and terror, and the manipulative enlistment of external forces on his behalf.

*C. Time is on the side of the Palestinians.*

Notwithstanding the military and political power enjoyed by Israel today, Arafat identifies Israel's weak points, which work in favor of the Palestinians. The first weakness is the demographic factor: The rate of natural increase among the Palestinian population is twice that of the Jewish population of Israel. In the course of the years, the Palestinian power in this area will grow even further. Accordingly, there is no reason for the Palestinians to give up on any of the essential points. A second weakness involves the great sensitivity of Israeli society to loss of human life. A third weakness is the divisive, fragmented nature of Israeli society. In light of all this, Arafat believes that, in the course of time, broad cracks will appear in the Israeli armor, meaning that all the Palestinians need is patience.

### **III. Characteristics of Arafat's Strategy**

#### **1. In the political negotiations with Israel**

*Arafat has set red lines for himself with regard to the basic issues of the negotiation for the permanent status—borders, the right of return, sovereignty over Jerusalem, and so forth—and has consistently maintained them throughout the years.* Thus, for example, on the question of Jerusalem, as early as September 1993, in an interview with Radio Monte Carlo, Arafat stated: "If the prime minister of Israel, Yitzhak Rabin, has red lines with regard to the destiny of East Jerusalem, I too have such lines, and they are very hard, because Jerusalem is stamped within the soul of millions of Muslims and Christians throughout the world." He emphasized that the Palestinians would not give up one inch of the soil of Jerusalem. Arafat stated that the Palestinian state, as he had promised in the past, was only a stone's throw away. "At this stage, we are getting the Strip and Jericho; later, we will gradually get the remainder of the territories which were occupied in the June 1967 war" (Gabai, 1993b). In fact, if one compares the red lines which the Palestinians brought with them to the negotiations at the Madrid Conference (1991) and their positions at Camp David II (2000), one sees that Arafat has maintained the red lines which he set for himself and has allowed himself only a very slight degree of flexibility, compared to the erosion of Israel's positions.

With regard to the permanent arrangement, the only essential subject on which the Palestinians showed any flexibility at Camp David II was their willingness to enable Israel to preserve blocs of settlements in Judea and Samaria, but only to the extent of a very small percentage of the territories, and in return for alternative territory within the Green Line (territory in the area of the Halutza Dunes in the Negev). In other words, Arafat has agreed to transform his demand for full withdrawal to the June 1967 borders into a demand for withdrawal from about 95 percent of the territories, with an exchange of territories as compensation. With regard to the interim agreement, whose principles were set forth in the Oslo Agreement, Israel has not succeeded in getting any flexibility out of Arafat. In this connection, Brigadier General Yaakov Amidror, former head of the Research Division, Israel Defense Forces Intelligence Corps, stated: "It appears that what we [the Intelligence Corps] had defined, a year before [the Oslo Agreement], as the conditions according to which the Palestinians would agree to sign an agreement, is exactly the Oslo Agreement. We did not manage to move the Palestinians one millimeter away from

their red lines." Also: "There was a grave feeling of frustration at the fact that it was immediately obvious that part of what was written in the agreement would not actually take place in the reality of the Middle East. We immediately brought this evaluation to the attention of the minister of defense" (Berkowitz, 1998).

***Arafat tends to move the struggle onto his own playing field.*** Analysis of the historical process that led to the Oslo Agreement indicates that it was not Israel that brought Arafat to Oslo; rather, it was he who dragged Israel there. Arafat did this by creating a blind alley in the negotiations in Washington and frustrating the Israeli-American attempt to conduct negotiations with representatives of the territories. The move to Oslo, from Arafat's point of view, reflected a substantial difference in the negotiations, not only with regard to the Israeli and international recognition granted to himself and to the PLO. In Oslo, Israel agreed, for the first time, to conduct negotiations on the rights of all Palestinians worldwide (the "right of return"), as opposed to the negotiations in Washington, where the representatives of the territories were supposed to represent their own population only. Moreover, in Oslo, Israel consented to conduct negotiations with regard to the sovereignty over East Jerusalem. This is one of the most impressive historical achievements attained by Arafat: He succeeded in exploiting the myopia of the Israeli politicians, who did not give the proper attention to the significance of the Palestinian demand for the "right of return" and belittled the seriousness of Arafat's demands in other areas of the permanent arrangement.

It is now obvious that Israel would have done better to refrain from signing the Oslo Agreement before the problem of the "right of return" had been solved. This is because the realization of Arafat's demands on Israel in this regard amounts to a threat to Israel's existence. It should be noted that the division of the negotiations with the Palestinians into two components—the interim phase and the permanent arrangement—played into Arafat's hands and reduced the assets that could be used by Israel for bargaining purposes toward the permanent arrangement.

*Arafat deflects the campaign from the political arena to the military arena, according to his strategic requirements.* This is reflected in the transition from the negotiating table at Camp David II to the battlefield of the Al-Aqsa Intifada. His present-day ability to act against the settlers in the disputed territories springs, inter alia, from the fact that the Israeli delegation to Oslo agreed to leave most of the territories in Arafat's hands, without considering the need to protect those settlements when a crisis might arise in the negotiations on the permanent arrangement, following which Arafat would result to terror—as, in fact, he has done.

*In conducting the negotiations, Arafat is walking a thin line—and sometimes crossing it.* Arafat considers himself to be better and more shrewd than his opposite numbers and rivals. He is not afraid to push the envelope to the limit, to change tactics at the last moment, to provoke crises and go back on his agreed word. His behavior at the negotiating table is characterized by the creation of crises, in a true "Oriental bazaar" style: creating bargaining sessions in which the party with the better combination of craft and fortitude wins. At times, Arafat approaches the negotiations with an attitude of "I have nothing to lose" (Rubinstein, 1995b). Arafat conveys to all of the other parties to the negotiations—Israel, the United States and international entities—the message that it is incumbent upon them to appease him; if they don't, he just won't play. This is reflected in his negotiations with Israel. One of his tactics is "leaving the table": When Arafat is not satisfied, he walks away from the negotiating table, hoping that the remaining parties, who want the negotiations to go on, will call him back—or, at least, he threatens to leave the table, such as, at the Taba negotiations, (Dayan, 1995a; 1995b). Another tactic is "upsetting the table"—that is, breaking up the negotiations, with a view to changing the rules of the game in his favor (Perry, 1994). An additional tactic is to suggest that, if he accepts the proposals given to him, his domestic opponents may have him killed (Horowitz, 2001).

*Arafat has been "recycling" the considerations that he promised Israel in the course of the negotiations.* For example, he has promised Israel, again and again, cooperation with the Palestinians in matters of security and defense—and, again and again, has gone back on his word. Each time, he has made new demands in return for cooperation. This also applies to the arrest of members of the opposition (the "revolving door," for example, Ya'ari, 1996a) and other issues.

*Arafat is attempting to exploit the "strength of weakness" in the negotiations.* The weakness of the Palestinians vis-à-vis Israel, with its large, strong army and developed technology, has become one of his principal public relations tools. The strong can and should defer to the weak, whereas the weak have no possibility of doing so. Arafat uses this tactical maneuver on both the personal level ("they're threatening me," "the opposition will kill me," "the people in the street will never accept such a concession," and so forth) and the national level ("the

Israelis have to understand; they have to give in").

*Arafat always leaves himself an opening for additional demands from Israel.* Thus, for example, he did not agree to complete the interim agreement and to compromise on a "third stage" of withdrawal. As far as he was concerned, as long as the interim agreement was not completed, he still had a basis for additional claims, even without bringing up the differences with regard to the permanent arrangement. This is also what happened at his meeting with then Prime Minister Ehud Barak at Camp David II: He refused to agree to commit to ending the conflict, even if a consensus was reached on additional points of the permanent arrangement.

*Arafat does not recoil from moves that might endanger his achievements at the negotiating table.* Arafat rejected the proposals advanced by Israel and the United States at Camp David II and set off the Al-Aqsa Intifada. In so doing, he took the risk that he would lose what had already been achieved in the negotiations. Today, he is having difficulty explaining to his people why he sacrificed hundreds of Palestinians in this move; this difficulty makes it harder for him to reach a decision that will lead to the cessation of violence.

*Arafat objects to economic separation from Israel within the framework of the agreement that will be reached.* In a conference on December 5, 1998, in Stockholm, marking the tenth anniversary of the PLO's acceptance of the principle of two states, Arafat expressed his objection to separation between the Israeli and the Palestinian economy. As he put it, following the establishment of the Palestinian state, Israelis and Palestinians would be able to live, work, and travel freely in all parts of Palestine and Israel, while respecting the law and the sovereignty of each party. In April 2000, Palestinian sources stated that Arafat had proposed to President Clinton the establishment of industrial zones common to Israelis and Palestinians within the June 1967 borders. Arafat's approach to separation reflects his recognition of the dilemma of how the Palestinians can detach from Israel politically without losing the advantages of Israel's economy—in the areas of employment, technology, and markets—that are essential to the development of the Palestinian economy. At the same time, Arafat's attitude is also marked by political positions that are not really concerned with the purely economic aspect, such as his attempts at achieving rapprochement with Israeli Arabs and free travel between the Gaza Strip and Judea and Samaria, which he views as a single entity.

In contrast, Muhammad Rashid, Arafat's economic adviser, is convinced that the Palestinians also need economic separation. In an interview in *Ha'aretz* on February 6, 2000, he told the Israelis: "First of all, we need a fair divorce, and only afterwards, a fair economic marriage." As he put it, Israeli politicians are admittedly speaking in terms of the right of separation, and yet, at lower-level meetings, Israel is offering the Palestinians agreement for unified customs duties and the establishment of free trade between the two states. In his opinion, these ideas are not compatible with the requirements of the Palestinian economy. Rashid claims that the high customs duties of Israel are not in line with the needs of the Palestinians, whose level of income is significantly lower than that of the Israelis.

In this matter, Arafat has obtained the support of the United States, which is wary of economic separation, for reasons related to the stability of the Palestinian Authority. Stuart Eisenstadt, the United States undersecretary of finance, stated in October 1999 that it is important for Israel to continue along the lines of the steps it has already taken: keeping the border opening, relaxation of the restrictions on Palestinian foreign trade, and increasing the number of workers from the territories at the expense of foreign workers (Levin, 1999). In any event, in actual practice, the Palestinians are planning and implementing a variety of steps that will reduce their economic dependency on Israel. Such projects are especially prominent in the Gaza Strip: the creation of an electrical power plant, the development of Gaza Port, the establishment of a cargo terminal at Gaza Airport, the intention to establish a fuel terminal in Gaza. These projects are important for Arafat, not only because of their economic contribution, but because they constitute characteristics of an independent state. Within the framework of the Al-Aqsa Intifada, the Palestinians are boycotting Israeli goods that have a substitute (local, Arab, or foreign), such as foodstuffs, plastic, medications and iron (Greenbaum, 2001).

## **2. With regard to the use of force against Israel**

*Arafat is trying to grab the stick at both ends.* He has chosen the way of political action and the way of armed struggle at the same time. Arafat's entry into the Oslo process did not motivate him to abandon the use of violence, but rather, to choose new tools appropriate to the new situation. His choice of diplomacy was perceived by him as a strategy for the attainment of his objectives; when that strategy did not avail, even though for only a limited time, he brought out the tools of violence. Arafat has two main types of tools of violence. One involves



stirring up the Arab masses—sending mobs of Palestinians out into the streets to clash with the Israel Defense Forces. The other involves the use of terror—including refusal to cooperate with Israel on security and defense matters, creating the conditions for terror, encouraging terror by the opposition (e.g., the release of Hamas terrorists, giving a “green light” to opposition members; Alon, 2001a), and even sponsoring acts of terror by his own people (shooting ambushes, explosive charges, mortar fire, and so forth). The Al-Aqsa Intifada was not the first time that Arafat’s own people have used terror against Israel. On July 14, 1997, three Palestinian officers were captured; they had been sent by the head of the Palestinian police, Ghazi Jibali, to launch a shooting attack in the Har Bracha area (Shaked, 1997).

At the same time, at least until October 2000, Arafat was very careful not to be perceived by the outside world as being involved in the violence. He set the tools of violence in operation by means of an “unspoken dialogue”—that is, by giving signs and hints to the Palestinian opposition, to lead them to understand that terror was permissible. When he began to actively incite terror, he took pains to make it look like a spontaneous response by the Palestinian masses and looked for grounds for such action, so as to cast the blame on Israel (such as the events around the Western Wall Tunnel in September 1996 and Sharon’s ascent of the Temple Mount in September 2000). Nonetheless, the more he uses the tools of violence, the more obvious his involvement is. In March 2001, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon told the members of the Mitchell Committee that “according to information in Israel’s possession, which originates with the intelligence services and with statements made by senior members of the Authority, Yasir Arafat’s decision to make use of violence was a strategic decision and was intended to attain political goals” (Muallem, 2001). In September 2001, Marwan Barghouti, head of the Tanzim on the West Bank, called on Arafat to take an open stand at the head of the armed struggle against Israel.

It should be noted that that two-stage strategy (going from violent mass demonstrations to use of arms) is not new for Arafat, but had already been applied in the first intifada. In January 1988, Arafat declared, “The large popular uprising will expand and will take on a form with additional waves, such that the enemy will not be able to suppress it even with terror and oppressive steps.” He promised that the PLO would increase the riots in the territories and “in the future, the residents will use arms against soldiers.” In his words, “Although we haven’t yet used arms during the uprisings in the occupied land, the Palestinian leadership will take appropriate steps that will guarantee the escalation of violence against the Zionist occupying forces.” Arafat’s adviser utilized the same opportunity to say that “Arafat uses a cellular phone to stay in contact with the youngsters in Gaza and guide them” (Alkabetz and Cohen, 1988). An additional example: On November 15, 1998, Arafat warned, “Most of us are ready and willing to use arms against anyone who tries to prevent us from praying in Jerusalem” (Tzezna, 1998).

Arafat’s use of terrorism and his willingness to conduct a violent struggle against Israel over a period of years has been given ample expression in reports of security agencies in Israel, based on sources and information collected clandestinely. As early as 1997, army intelligence warned that the terrorist act at the Apropro restaurant in Tel Aviv in March 1997 was carried out as a result of the “green light” that Arafat gave to the opposition parties in a meeting that he had had with them at night (Schiff, 1997). In April 1998, army intelligence warned, “The Palestinian Authority is prepared for an armed conflict with Israel” (Limor and Granot, 1998). This warning, in fact, came true. The head of the investigative unit of army intelligence, Brigadier General Amos Gila’ad, at a conference on national security, clarified that Arafat preferred a political solution, even though he sparked the violence in the territories. He said that Arafat has not lost control of his actions, and cynically and intelligently uses terror in an unprecedented way. Gila’ad added that the political in Israel did not grasp the importance of understanding the other side and did not refer to the intelligence that predicted the events (Frisch, 2000). In his appearance before the Knesset’s Security and Foreign Affairs Committee in July 2001, the chief of staff, Major General Shaul Mofaz, said that the Palestinian Authority has turned into “a terrorist entity.” According to him, many of those in the Palestinian security organizations take part in the terror and violence against Israel since the Al-Aksa Intifada began (Alon, 2001b).

General Amos Malka, head of army intelligence, on June 6, 2001, gave this evaluation: “Arafat prefers to continue the conflict with Israel rather than conduct internal conflicts with the Islamic opposition parties, as long as he has not been promised a strategic achievement after more than eight months of fighting.” Malka said that Arafat utilizes terrorism as his primary means of gaining his objectives. He activates some of the Palestinian organizations directly, and they are involved in terrorism, while he activates the Islamic organizations indirectly. In his words, “Arafat is standing with a bomb in his hands. His playing with explosives constitutes a threat to the region’s stability.” In his evaluation he noted, “After eight months of conflict, there is no end in sight. Arafat is preparing his people for an extended conflict, even for one hundred years” (Harel, 2001).

A senior officer in army intelligence who participated in the meeting Knesset's Security and Foreign Affairs Committee on May 14, 2001, said that Arafat was ready for a long and continuing struggle with Israel, and was willing to bequeath the struggle to subsequent generations. Arafat's message to his people has been that they are only at the beginning of the fight. The officer added that Arafat believes that a violent struggle with international support will succeed in bending Israel and will force the acceptance of his conditions. In his words, "Arafat sees himself as the leader of the entire Arab people, and not only of the Palestinians. He has no trouble transmitting soothing messages to his Israeli guests, but, at the same time, the strategic message that he is transmitting to the entire Palestinian public, is to continue to fight" (Alon, 2001a).

Avi Dichter, head of the General Security Services, said in April 2001 that Arafat's security apparatus in Gaza, commanded by Muhammad Dahlan, has turned into a terrorist organization in every way. According to him, Arafat is not interested in giving orders to stop the violence now, out of fear that it would weaken his position, and that Israel does not have a partner in the Palestinian Authority who will prevent terrorism (Harel and Baram, 2001).

*Arafat sees the intifada as a weapon with which to pressure Israel, in order to improve his position in negotiations and as an instrument to bring about the unilateral withdrawal of Israel without an agreement.* It is likely that his perception has been reinforced as more Israeli voices have been raised calling for a unilateral withdrawal, and from conclusions drawn from Hizballah's success in bringing about Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon in May 2000. Yet this is not a new perception for Arafat either. At the height of the first intifada, in 1989, he said in a statement from Tunisia: "Israel is losing its lines of defense, one after the other, on every front against the historic conflict with the uprising's leadership. Accordingly, it will not have a choice but to withdraw unconditionally from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip." In a statement then, Arafat called on the Palestinian masses to escalate the uprisings "since we are now in the last quarter of an hour of victory and of establishing an independent, democratic Palestine" (Ya'ari, 1989).

### 3. Concerning World Opinion and Israeli Opinion

*Arafat is trying to mobilize world opinion to help him.* In this framework, Arafat is attempting to utilize propaganda levers and manipulation, including exaggeration and lies concerning Israel's actions and intentions (see the chapter that deals with analyzing his personality). Since the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada, which he himself ignited, he presents himself to Israeli and world public opinion as a supporter of peace, facing Israel's cruel attacks that prevent the Palestinian civilian population from obtaining their basic needs, lacking rescue and defense - for example, Arafat's meeting with the Israeli journalist Barnea, (2001c) and with foreign consuls, (Ya'ari, 1996a). In order to create a negative image for Israel, he doesn't flinch from sending children to demonstrate violently against Israel, even when he anticipates the expected suffering of the Palestinian population from the closures and actions that the IDF will take.

*Arafat attempts to affect the decision-making process in Israel by means of activities affecting Israeli public opinion.* In this matter, Arafat acts in two extreme ways: On the one hand, he attempts to acquire the trust of the peace camp in Israel by emphasizing the steps he has taken on the way to peace; on the other hand, Arafat acts to extract a price in Israeli blood in order to bring about internal pressure on the Israeli leadership, making its position more flexible. Apparently, Hizballah's success in Lebanon reinforced this strategy. At the same time, it seems that Arafat failed, since he did not understand the "red line" of Israeli society beyond which the society unites and is willing to fight without compromise—for example, the consensus against his demand to return millions of Palestinians to Israel in the framework of the "right of return" and its resolved opposition to violence and terror.

In the matter of the "right of return," Arafat acted late and in an unconvincing way to pacify the Israeli public. For example, when Nachum Barnea asked him (June 2001) if there can be an overall agreement without a million refugees using their right to return, Arafat told him a story about Belize, a country in Central America. According to him, the prime minister of Belize is a member of the Shumaan family, the Palestinian equivalent to the Rothschild family, from Beit Hanina. "Do you think that Shumaan will leave Belize, and return to Beit Hanina?" Arafat asked. After that, he took from his pocket a newspaper clipping reporting that most of the new immigrants to Israel are not Jewish and said to Barnea, "How do you think we feel when hundreds of thousands of non-Jews are allowed to immigrate to Israel? I believe that in the framework of the overall agreement, creative solutions will be found for all of the things mentioned in Oslo: Jerusalem, settlements, borders, army areas, water, refugees. With goodwill, an agreement will be reached" (Barnea, 2001c).

Concerning violence and terror, Arafat did not take into account the negative ramifications of the Al-Aqsa Intifada on the Israeli left, although there were expressions of it in many Israeli surveys and in articles by political journalists. In an interview on Israeli television's Channel Two, on the eve of the Israeli elections, he quoted that the surveys showed that most of the adult Israeli population supports peace, without understanding the change in Israeli public opinion. His lack of understanding of Israeli society can be explained by his tremendous distance (both personally and politically) from democracy and the democratic system. Arafat was never in his life exposed, not even for a short time, to life in a democratic society. His personality traits are very far from a democratic outlook and from understanding the complex dialectics of this type of system. At the same time, Arafat is aided by important Arab Israelis, who advise him on how to act toward the Israeli public and its institutions. His demands after the elections in Israel—to continue the negotiations from the point where they had stopped—evidences his lack of understanding of the changes in Israeli society. Only quite a while after the change of government in Israel did Arafat understand that he had lost the trust of a large part of the Israeli public. In an interview with Barnea in June 2001, he answered positively to the question of whether he was convinced that he had the support of Israeli public opinion. "Yes," he said, "I am not happy with that, and would like to change it. I hope that most Israelis still want peace. Those igniting the fire are the settlers, and they are the minority" (Barnea, 2001c).

*Arafat identifies the arguments and disagreements in Israeli society as a clear sign of its weakness and tries to take advantage of them for his benefit.* This understanding contributes to his demands becoming more extreme, since he assumes that weakness will bring about flexibility in Israeli positions and in the end will tilt the balance into Palestinian hands. For example, among those close to him, Yasir Arafat brags that he already "sees a picture of the future." He speaks of the "demographic decline" that Israel is in, and promises those loyal to him that over time, large cracks will open up in the strong wall facing him. Only "a little patience," he said at the end of his speech on Nachba Day (Yaari, 2001). The obvious disagreement in Israeli society that Arafat identifies concerns the continued Israeli control of the territories. The impression is, therefore, that Arafat prefers to allow and even encourage terrorist acts against the settlers and IDF forces in the territories over terrorist acts against the Israeli population within the green line, even though he does not prevent the latter either.

*Arafat attempts to influence the decision-making process in Israel through Israeli Arabs.* This is not new. For example: In May 1995, Member of Knesset Abdulwahab Darawshe from the Mada Party (United Arab List) argued that "Yasir Arafat is not interested in torpedoing the negotiations with Israel, and so requested of the Mada Party that we not raise or discuss the no-confidence proposal on the issue of expropriation of land in Jerusalem." According to Darawshe, he spoke with Arafat's bureau director, Dr. Ramzi Houry, who clarified that, despite Arafat's anger about the expropriation of land in Jerusalem, he was not interested in toppling the Israeli government, as that might bring about a pause in the negotiations on continuing to implement the Oslo Accords (Baron and Regev, 1995).

#### **4. Concerning Foreign Countries**

*Arafat cooperates with the United States out of an awareness of its power and its influence on Israel and on Arab countries, but strives to limit its involvement.* From Arafat's position as an untouchable in the United States during the Gulf War, he transformed himself into a desirable visitor to the White House during the Clinton presidency. He even persuaded the U.S. government to go quite a distance in the direction of the Palestinian position during the political process. At the time, he succeeded in convincing the Americans of his striving for peace. For example, during Secretary of State Albright's visit to the Palestinian Authority, he said, "Peace is not only a Palestinian need, but an Israeli and international necessity. We have to continue the discussions toward peace, with the aim of protecting our children and grandchildren" (Atlas, 1998; Druker, 1998).

At the same time, Clinton's ability to influence Arafat turned out to be limited. Despite the heavy pressure that Clinton put on Arafat during Camp David II, Arafat was not flexible at all. Apparently, Arafat did not have a lot of trust in Clinton, in light of his [Clinton's] perceived preference for the Israeli side, the difference in mentalities between the two, the age gap, and Arafat's perception of Clinton as being temporary and soon-to-be-replaced in government, as is every leader of a democratic country. Arafat's position in the United States worsened with the change of government in Washington, and Clinton himself sobered up concerning Arafat's personality. At a party in the Manhattan home of Richard Holbrook, the previous U.S. representative to the UN, former President Clinton candidly told of his frustration over the collapse of the Middle East peace process: "Three days before I left office, Yasir Arafat called me to say goodbye. 'You're an outstanding person,' Arafat said to me. 'Is that what you think?' I answered him. 'I'm a giant failure and you turned me into that.'" Clinton added that he told Arafat that Barak's

proposal was the best peace proposal that the Palestinians could ever achieve, and that, by refusing the proposal, Arafat only guaranteed the election of Sharon as prime minister. Clinton defined Arafat as an aging leader who lives with the sense of being a victim and is incapable of reaching a final peace agreement. "He was only able to reach stage five when he had to get to stage ten," Clinton summarized. In Clinton's opinion, the negotiations failed due to the Palestinian demand for the right of return, because Arafat continued to talk about large numbers of refugees who would be allowed to return to Israel (*Yediot Aharonot*, 2001).

*Arafat attempts to turn the Israeli-Palestinian conflict into an international matter.* In this framework, Arafat strives to reduce the dominance of the United States in the political process. He tries to do this by introducing European brokers, pressuring to include UN observers or observers from foreign countries to the territories, etc. All of this is designed, in his view, to balance the asymmetry of the U.S. support for Israel. He demands bringing in international forces to narrow Israel's freedom of action and to gnaw away at its sovereignty in the territories.

*In the framework of his efforts to enlist forces in his favor, Arafat tries to involve the Arab countries in the conflict with Israel.* Arafat uses manipulative levers with leaders of Arab nations as well, knowing that bloody riots in the territories and Palestinian calls for Arab help will start internal ferment in Jordan and Egypt that will require their leaders to get in line with his position. This is his principal pressure mechanism on them. Toward the Arab world and the Islamic world, Arafat emphasizes the struggle over Jerusalem, considered to be the third holiest site in Islam. It should be noted that this, too, is not new in Arafat's strategy. In August 1989 he said in Amman at the ceremony opening the office of the National Palestinian Fund, which funded the intifada, that his organization would continue the jihad until his flag flies above the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the city of Jerusalem, capital of the democratic Palestinian state (*Ha'aretz*, 1989).

## 5. Arafat's Strategy in the Palestinian Arena

*Arafat takes into account the force that the Palestinian street exerts upon him.* Arafat is well aware of the winds blowing through Palestinian public opinion. In the year 2001, public opinion became more extreme as a result of its disappointment with the peace process and the continued confrontation with Israel, and the ramifications for the Palestinian population's daily life. Arafat identifies pictures of Iraqi president Saddam Hussein and the Hizballah's flags among the Palestinian masses and understands that he cannot swim against the stream. The IDF's unilateral withdrawal from southern Lebanon evidently hardened his position, since among the Palestinian population, it raised the question: If Nasrallah can bring about the withdrawal of the IDF with an organization of 600 fighters, why can't Arafat? Hizballah's demand to release Palestinian prisoners, in the framework of negotiations over prisoners of war with Israel, exposes his helplessness and strengthens the opposition. Saddam Hussein's struggle for survival against the United States, which constitutes a source of pride and identification on the Palestinian street, also makes it difficult for Arafat. Saddam reinforces his image among the Palestinian public by means of material aid to the families of suicide bombers and threats to attack Israel. Possibly, if the pressure on Iraq intensifies, Arafat might harden his positions and even aggravate the confrontation to satisfy his people.

At the same time, Arafat can certainly go against the stream in the Palestinian camp. This happens when he is convinced that it will promote the achievement of his objective, the establishment of a Palestinian state, and that, in the end, the majority of Palestinian public will recognize the correctness of his position and his great wisdom. An example of his independent action was his signing of the Oslo Accords, which were not supported by the majority of PLO members and the Palestinian public. In other words, Arafat can make decisions concerning the peace process, even if they are not supported by the majority in public opinion surveys. It must be further noted that Arafat has no opposition on the left, calling for him to compromise and accelerate the peace process, but only an opposition demanding that he harden his position opposing Israel. In all likelihood this fact, too, contributes to his hardening positions.

*Arafat uses policies of divide-and-conquer among his people.* Arafat has not appointed an heir or successor to himself, and makes sure to divide foci of power, so that, as a result of the multiple foci in the Palestinian Authority, he better controls the whole. For example, control of the various security forces is divided between "foreign" and "internal" leadership, and there is a clear separation between control of the security apparatus in Gaza and control of the security apparatus in Judea and Samaria. Arafat maximally utilizes his administrative control by calling into session the various leaderships of the Palestinians, Al Fatah, and the Palestinian Authority, to assist him in making decisions. Thus, for example, Arafat will not call a Palestinian forum into session without having a majority that supports his decision, and will seek the forum and timing most appropriate for his needs. In its time, that was how he got the Oslo Accords approved.

*Arafat ensures the personal profits of people close to him.* The economic activities of part of the economy are conducted via monopolies handed over to high-ranking figures in the Authority. The most blatant among these beneficiaries is Muhammad Rashid, Arafat's economic adviser, who manages his investments and those of the Authority. Together with Ramzi Hourri, Arafat's bureau chief, Rashid directs the Al-Bahar company, which controls the cement, steel, and sand monopolies in the Authority. Together with Hassan Atzpour, a member of the negotiating team and Arafat's adviser, Rashid is a partner in the firm that operates the gas monopoly. Jamil Tripi, in charge of the Ministry of Citizens Affairs, is an owner of a building contracting and quarries company and sells cars. Mohammed Abass (Abu Mazen) is the owner of the Sky advertising company and of import-export agencies. Ahmed Kria (Abu A'la) is the importer of Marlboro cigarettes and canned goods. Maher Al Matzri, minister of economics, is the owner of gas stations and imports cars. Munrad Tzalach, minister of higher education, is a food importer in the West Bank. Nabil Abu Radina, Arafat's adviser is a partner with Soha in a company that imports cloth and pharmaceuticals, and has the exclusive license to import a number of pharmaceuticals. Jibril Rajub, head of security in the West Bank, owns a farm in the Jericho region, gets commissions from the casino in Jericho, and is responsible for insuring the safe transport of gas. Rajub collects a tax from the gas stations, a regular percentage of their sales. Mahmud Dahlan, commander of the security forces in Gaza, owns many businesses in Gaza (Greenbaum, 2000; 2001). An investigation published in *Newsweek* in May disclosed, "Top-ranking ministers fill their offices with 'their own people,' distribute fat contracts without supervision or control, and establish their own monopolies that crush competing companies and raise prices for the consumer." Moreover, "The courts are powerless, since Arafat ignores uncomfortable verdicts. His fourteen police units, each one functioning separately, meant to protect the average Palestinian, unlawfully enforce the wishes of the Authority's officials" (Dagoni, 2000).

*Arafat avoids direct confrontation with the opposition.* He perceives himself as a leader of all the Palestinians, above differences in opinion and outlook. Therefore, he tries to avoid, as much as possible, direct clashes and conflicts with those in opposition, as long as they do not directly threaten his rule. One can assume that only when he is forced to choose between continuing his rule and conflict with the opposition will he try to reach an agreement or a compromise as quickly as possible—after he proves that he is the leader. In addition, Arafat needs the terror that the opposition organizations conduct as a bargaining card in negotiations with Israel and to strengthen the Palestinian military effort. With that, Arafat is aware that opposition organizations harm Palestinian interests, especially when the Palestinians stand to gain something from Israel. For example: in November 1998, Arafat warned the terrorist organizations, "Do not do anything that will give Israel an excuse to prevent implementation of the Wye agreement. Do not allow them to get involved in our arena" (Tzezna, 1998). Due to his unwillingness to confront the opposition and as a result of his needing them, Arafat has avoided real security cooperation with Israel. An example of the PA's and Arafat's cynical disregard for acts of terror and scorn for fulfilling the agreements for cooperation was their reaction to the terrorist act at the Dolphinarium. Israel passed on the names of the Hamas members who sent the suicide bomber to the Palestinian Authority. The Authority invited them in for a discussion and released them with a warning not to do anything similar. Thus Arafat makes fools of Israel and America. None of this would have taken place without his approval. Administratively, he makes sure he confuses and controls his representatives on the High Security Commission. Each one of his senior representatives are separately responsible directly to Arafat, and he thus prevents real cooperation between them (Schiff, 2001b).

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#### IV. Summary of the Features of Arafat's Strategy

##### Party

##### Features of Arafat's Action

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|---------------------------|---|
| 1. The Israeli Government | Arafat wants to have his cake and eat it: he chooses a strategy of political negotiation or a strategy of violence and terrorism, according to his strategic needs and the chances of achieving success from his perspective. |
|---------------------------|---|



2. Israeli Public Opinion He maintains a manipulative line of propaganda, especially vis-à-vis the left. He presents himself as a peace lover, but at the same time employs violent measures.
3. Israeli Arabs He integrates them into the Palestinian camp and utilizes their help to influence Israeli positions.
4. The United States He tries to bring the U.S. administration closer to his positions, but strives to reduce American dominance in the negotiations, because of its support for Israel.
5. Western Europe and the United Nations He works to strengthen their support for him and to involve them as much as possible in the conflict with Israel, in order to reduce the influence of the U.S. and to put obstacles in Israel's path.
6. World Public Opinion He implements propaganda moves and manipulates the dissemination of information to advance Palestinian interests
7. Heads of the Palestinian Authority Arafat uses tactics of "divide and rule," granting economic benefits to his associates to retain their loyalty.
8. Palestinian Public Opinion Arafat takes into account the trends of public opinion as expressed by the Arab man-on-the-street, but almost totally ignores the economic distress of the population. He regards this as a necessary sacrifice in the short term for the sake of important political gains in the long run. He also encourages the incitement of the population through the media and the educational system.
9. Opposition Organizations Arafat is helped by opposition organizations to act against Israel, but he warns them not to harm his own interests. He refrains, as much as possible, from confronting them, but will go to war on them if they endanger his rule or his strategic objectives.
10. The Arab States Arafat is active in recruiting financial and political support through the application of pressure on Arab leaders and by indirect threats (mainly toward Egypt and Jordan) of arousing the Arab street. He often stresses the struggle over Jerusalem to harness the Arab and Islamic worlds to help him achieve his ends.

## V. Conclusions

1. Arafat may return to the course of negotiations when he sees that he cannot expect any benefits from continuing the violent struggle. Therefore, Arafat must not be allowed to gain any political achievement as a result of his violent measures. The use of violence to advance his aims will continue to be part of Arafat's behavioral repertoire in the future, and he will make more frequent use of this tactic if he feels he can achieve anything in this way.
2. Spectacular military operations—such as air strikes, massive fire directed at targets in the areas of the Palestinian Authority, etc.—have a limited effect on Arafat. He knows the limitations of Israel's power and in situations of confrontation feels at his best, tends to take risks, and is willing to make sacrifices, more so than in normal circumstances. Many pinpointed actions have a better chance of being effective, because they undermine Arafat's sense of being in control of the situation.
3. Economic pressure on the population—such as closures or cutting off the water and electrical supply—will not have any significant effect on Arafat, because he has no problem in making sacrifices and will be better able to present the distress of the Palestinian population to the eyes of the world. Moreover, the distress of the Palestinian population encourages Arafat to harden his position and to develop expectations that the sufferings of the population will lead to international intervention, which is in his interest.

4. Economic pressure on Arafat in the form of withholding of tax funds collected by Israel and curtailment of foreign aid have an effect on Arafat, if they continue over a long period. Money is one of the means through which Arafat wields control. These funds constitute the major bulk of the financial resources of the Palestinian Authority and are required to finance the work of administration and the security forces. In contrast to military closures in the territories, Arafat will find it difficult to demonstrate the damage resulting from a shortage of these funds to the Palestinian people. At the same time, it should be taken into account that a severe damage to the security organs is liable to undermine the stability of the Palestinian Authority.

5. It is possible to influence Arafat through Hosni Mubarak, the Egyptian president. Mubarak is his main partner for dialogue, being a determined Arab leader of the same age as Arafat who goes along with the Palestinian strategy of attaining Palestinian objectives by means of the political process. Mubarak may provide legitimacy to Arafat's concessions on certain issues, but in many cases it was he who was behind the toughening of the Palestinian position in the negotiations. For example, in the negotiations Arafat conducted with the Barak government at the end of its term of office, President Mubarak made it clear to Arafat that he had no right to make concessions on Jerusalem, because the city was holy to all Arabs and Moslems (Mubarak boasted of this in a speech before students, which was broadcast on Egyptian television on August 28, 2001).

Arafat is also capable of identifying with Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi president, whom he perceives as an exemplary model of a proud and staunch Arab with the ability to be steadfast. Abdullah, the Jordanian king, and Bashar Assad, the president of Syria, have minor influence over Arafat because of their young age and the residue of the past history of the relations between their states and the Palestinians. At the same time, Abdullah's position on the issue of Jerusalem could have an effect on Arafat. Therefore, if President Mubarak and King Abdullah were to support a compromise on the Temple Mount, this would make it much easier for Arafat to compromise.

6. American pressure alone will not bring Arafat to change his position on essential issues (e.g., Jerusalem, the right of return, etc.). Apparently, Arafat's attitude toward President Bush is not very different from his ambivalent attitude toward President Clinton. Arafat prefers that the representatives of the UN and Western European countries that support him should have places around the negotiating table so as to weaken the American hegemony in the negotiations.

7. It is best not to utilize ultimatums in dealings with Arafat, and especially not a public ultimatum. Arafat feels that such a demand damages his honor and is intended to humiliate him. Therefore, there are limited chances that he will give in to an Israeli ultimatum, especially if made public. In circumstances in which he feels his position weak, he is liable to try to work within the gray area of the ultimatum to erode it. Therefore, it would be desirable to signal to Arafat if there is no choice—to convey the ultimatum to him discreetly. Alternatively, it would be worthwhile to employ a completely businesslike strategy in dealing with Arafat: "As you give, so you shall receive," or to present him with an equation: "If you give X, you shall receive Y"—and then allow him to make the choice on his own.

8. It would be advisable to deal with Arafat respectfully and to demonstrate gestures of goodwill toward him that have a bearing on his personal status. Such gestures have an effect on his state of mind and feed his desire to be honored and to receive recognition. At the same time, he will not make concessions on essential issues in return for such gestures.

9. The negotiation regarding the permanent settlement should be based on a final and conclusive agreement that will not enable Arafat to make any further strategic demands from Israel. At the same time, Arafat probably needs a longer period of time to digest the essential issues, such as a solution to the problem of the Temple Mount and the termination of the conflict, and to come to terms with not being able to make more demands on Israel. Therefore, if the negotiations resume, Israel must not assert pressure upon him to reach a decision quickly, but at the same time must not give him any more significant interim concessions, because the leverage remaining for bargaining with him in the future might be too short to persuade him to sign an agreement acknowledging the termination of the conflict.

10. It would be reasonable to assume that Arafat will not concede Palestinian sovereignty over the Temple Mount. Arafat's insistence on receiving sovereignty over East Jerusalem stems from his vision of establishing the Palestinian capital there as he promised, and also from his wish to be an important leader in the eyes of the Arab, Islamic, and Christian worlds. Apparently, Arafat is not prepared to go down in history as the one who gave up

the Temple Mount. At the same time, it should not be ruled out that Arafat would agree to a compromise formula on the issue of sovereignty over the Temple Mount (joint sovereignty, division of the area so that the mosques will remain within his sovereignty), on condition that this arrangement be acceptable to the major leaders of the Arab world, such as Mubarak.

11. How will Arafat react if Israel implements a unilateral disengagement, meaning withdrawal from most of the territories under its control without arriving at an agreement, entailing an evacuation of a large number of settlements? It can be assumed that in the wake of a unilateral withdrawal Arafat will instruct the Palestinian Authority to take control of all the areas that are vacated, and afterwards he might make a unilateral proclamation of an independent Palestinian state. Arafat might assume that Israel, in relinquishing its responsibility for the territories and for the Palestinian residents, would not be able to oppose the declaration and that he [Arafat] would be accorded overwhelming international support for a Palestinian state. It would be reasonable to assume that in these circumstances, Arafat would not agree to return to negotiations with Israel under present terms, but insist on an equal status of state vis-à-vis state—in other words, the Palestinians would claim all the rights pto an independent state, such as the right to self-defense, water rights, etc. This would enable the Palestinian state to form an army, maintain diplomatic relations, make treaties, and maybe even enter defense treaties with various states including Iraq, Iran, and Libya.

12. Despite the withdrawal, Arafat would not rest as long as the core disputed issues of the negotiations were not resolved: sovereignty over the Temple Mount, the law of return, borders, and settlements (any not vacated in a unilateral withdrawal). Therefore, the struggle would not be terminated by unilateral withdrawal. In these circumstances, Israel's situation would be complicated and even more problematic. Various Palestinian organizations, such as Hamas, Islamic Jihad, the Tanzim, and the Palestinian security forces would continue to attack Israel and targets within the territories. In addition to squads infiltrating Israeli territory, terrorist elements would also be active in the utilization of artillery, antitank missiles, and anti-aircraft missiles. In the wake of such actions, Israel would be liable to wage war against the Palestinian state, which would then be a sovereign state and a member of the UN, and thus Israel would be exposed to international pressure and maybe even sanctions. Following such an Israeli withdrawal, Arafat would claim to have won an overpowering military victory over Israel, unprecedented in the history of the Arab nation. This would have negative repercussions on the chances of terminating the Arab-Israeli conflict by political means at a future date. It would reduce the motivation of the Arab world to arrive at a peace agreement with Israel; the peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan would be further compromised and the strength of the opposition within the Arab world would be increased. Therefore, in contrast to a unilateral disengagement, it would be better for Israel to wait until the appropriate conditions prevail to enable the implementation of an agreed-upon disengagement—in other words, disengagement in accordance with a political agreement with the Palestinians, either a permanent or a partial agreement. In the meantime Israel could put into place a barrier between Israel and the territories, with the IDF continuing to maintain control over the territories (except for the territory of the Palestinian Authority), as an interim step until a political agreement can be reached. This might continue, except for changes in the deployment of settlements and military bases on the basis of tactical considerations.

13. Arafat's policy of "divide and rule" has prevented the creation of an alternative leadership. Against this background, and due to the multiplicity of forces active in the Palestinian arena, it is necessary to take into account the possibility of the eruption of a crisis in the Palestinian leadership, especially if Arafat suddenly descends from the stage.

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## **Yasir Arafat: Identities in Conflict**

**By Prof. Jerrold Post**

A consummate survivor, throughout his revolutionary career, Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat has led with his finger squarely in the wind, extremely sensitive to the tide of public opinion. While he has consistently espoused the goal of an independent Palestinian state, an examination of his career suggests that his highest priority has been securing his role as the leader of the unified Palestinian resistance. On any number of occasions, by recognizing Israel's right to exist, Arafat could have placed unbearable international pressure on Israel for the creation of a Palestinian entity, but Arafat's wish to be the leader of the unified Palestinian resistance, in effect, vetoed the absolutism of the extremist wing of the Palestinian movement.

But this was to change in 1992. When Arafat's plane crashed in the Libyan Desert on April 4, it was initially feared that the PLO leader had been killed. He was found the next day, dazed, by the wreck of the private plane in which his pilot has been killed. In June, suffering from severe headaches, he was rushed to King Hussein Hospital in Amman, Jordan, for emergency neurosurgery to remove two blood clots pressing on the brain, a life-threatening result of the trauma sustained eight weeks earlier. It was after this event that he entered into the secret negotiations that were to result in the Oslo Accords, beginning the peace process that culminated with the Wye River accords. Having confronted his mortality, and seeing that his time was limited, he resolved to take an unprecedented step to achieve his goal of a Palestinian state, to ensure his place in history, to ensure that history books would record Yasir Arafat as the father of the Palestinian nation. In the process, he not only won the Nobel Peace Prize, but also incurred the enmity of the absolutist extremist wing of the Palestinian movement for selling out the cause (for an analysis of the effects of serious and terminal illness upon political behavior, see Robins and Post, 1997).

The task of leading a nation in embryo is very different from leading a resistance movement against an occupying state. When the revolution has succeeded, few revolutionary leaders succeed in leading their new-born nations, for the leadership tasks and abilities of leading a group in opposition against the hated enemy are very different from those required by a nation-builder. To rouse a group against the hated establishment is very different from becoming the establishment. Few have succeeded in making this transition—Fidel Castro being an exception to this general rule, but Castro's success in fending off criticism of his internal leadership has been graciously facilitated by the U.S. economic embargo, which has permitted Castro to continue to be able to externalize, pointing the finger of blame at the enemies in the north for his internal problems.

Arafat has not made this transition well. He has continued to demonstrate an autocratic leadership style more congenial to a fighting revolutionary, and has been criticized by moderate Palestinian leaders for not developing a more participatory democracy, as he strives to develop the infrastructure. Moreover, in dealing with the negotiations during the peace process, he continued to be absolutist in his demands, not offering any compromise in response to the extreme flexibility shown by Israel's Prime Minister Barak. Further, as Barak was preparing the Israeli public for the necessity to make painful concessions and compromises to achieve the long-desired peace, Arafat was not in parallel way preparing the Palestinian public to compromise. To the contrary, he continued to maintain a public posture that total satisfaction of Palestinian demands for East Jerusalem as a capital, control over the holy sites, and the right of return, the most difficult of the issues that are in play, would be required. At Camp David II, agreement was tantalizingly close. But Arafat's refusal to offer any reciprocal response to Barak's major concessions ultimately doomed the talks to failure, although, in the long run, putting into play the previously taboo issues of Jerusalem and the right of return was a major accomplishment for Arafat.

And now, sadly, we are again in a state of violent conflict, a major step backward from the accomplishments of recent years.. Shelving his Nobel medal, Arafat once again exhorts Palestinian youth to "fight for Jerusalem" and

praises the youthful "martyrs" who have lost their lives in the conflict. It is as if "the leader of the unified Palestinian resistance" template is his default position. Ominously, Arafat has released from Palestinian prisons radical members of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad, some of whom were responsible for the wave of terrorist attacks in the mid-90s, when a suicide bombing campaign claimed 57 lives in 1996. Arafat has now brought a number of these leaders into a decision-making committee to plan and coordinate the violent protest, leading to fear in Israel of a new wave of terrorist attacks. Despite repeated pleas to seek to constrain the violence, Arafat has not done so, placing the entirety of the blame upon Israel, justifying Palestinian violence in terms of a legitimate response to the Israeli occupation and disproportionate violence by the Israeli military, with no acknowledgment of Palestinian participation in the cycle of violence. Once again, in this competition for victimhood, each side justifies its violence as a required response to the aggression of the other. It may be, however, that having unleashed the genie of violence, Arafat is afraid that calls for restraint would now go unheeded, betraying the weakness of his leadership position.

When missiles rained upon Arafat's headquarters in Ramallah in response to a wave of suicide bombings in which 30 were killed, Arafat was reported to be euphoric. Once again, he was in his favored position, the underdog, the innocent victim, calling out to the international community for support against the Israeli aggression, despite the his role in precipitating the attack. His dominant identity as leader of the unified resistance was once again firmly in place.

Arafat is ill and nearing the end of his career. In November 1998, after a conference celebrating the twentieth anniversary of Camp David at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, with original participants in the Camp David negotiations, we traveled under armed guard to Arafat's headquarters in the occupied territories to have an audience with Arafat. While I knew he had been ailing and was suffering from Parkinson's disease, I was shocked by his appearance. His eyes deeply sunk in his head, he appeared exhausted, and displayed a major tremor around his mouth. Yet, when he spoke, his rhetoric was fiery, as he indicated, "I have kept my promises. The reason for the failure of the peace negotiations is him, Netanyahu. He cannot be trusted and has broken his promises." (We then had an audience with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, who apparently had the same speechwriter, for he stated, "I have kept my promises. He [referring to Arafat] cannot be trusted and has broken his promises.")

The ill-fitting garb of peacemaker has been replaced by the much more familiar battle fatigues of the revolutionary fighter. Can Arafat again return to the path of peace? Each morning as Arafat looks into the mirror, and is confronted with his aging tremulous visage, he is reminded that his time is short and that his goal of achieving a Palestinian state has not yet been accomplished. Thus for Arafat, two clocks are ticking. While the auguries are pessimistic at the present time, in that career-long wish to be the father of the Palestinian state lies the hope that Arafat will yet move back from the brink and return to the role of peace-maker.

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